COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

House of Representatives

Hansard

THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2020

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**SITTING DAYS—2020**

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FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. David John Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE (Retd)

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Deputy Speaker—Mr Llewellyn Stephen O’Brien MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Dr David Arthur Gillespie MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Hon. Dr John Joseph McVeigh MP, Ms Maria Vanvakinou MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Andrew Bruce Wallace MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP, Mr Richard James Wilson MP, Mr Trent Moir Zimmerman MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christian Porter MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Butler MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP

Government Whips—Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP and Ms Nicolle Flint MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. David Littleproud MP
Chief Whip—Hon. Damian Kevin Drum MP
Deputy Whip—Mr Kenneth Desmond O’Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Richard Marles MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Ms Anne Maree Stanley MP

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<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Clark, TAS</td>
<td>IND</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton</td>
<td>Fremantle, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert</td>
<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George,</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young, Mr Terry James</td>
<td>Longman, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
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</table>
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<tr>
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<th>Division</th>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CA—Centre Alliance; IND—Independent; KAP—Katter’s Australia Party; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;

### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

- Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
- Clerk of the House of Representatives—C Surtees
- Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
- Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson
# MORMISON MINISTRY

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<tr>
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<th>MINISTER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians</td>
<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</td>
<td>The Hon David Littleproud MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
<td>The Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport</td>
<td>The Hon Andrew Gee MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Buchholz MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</td>
<td>The Hon Nola Marino MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
<td>The Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon Michael Sukkar MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Housing</td>
<td>The Hon Michael Sukkar MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and Financial Technology</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jane Hume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Zed Seselja</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Environment</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia</td>
<td>The Hon Keith Pitt MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management</td>
<td>The Hon Trevor Evans MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Industrial Relations</td>
<td>The Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Youth and Sport</td>
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<td>The Hon Mark Coulton MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon David Coleman MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Jason Wood MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Education</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education</td>
<td>The Hon Andrew Gee MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships</td>
<td>The Hon Steve Irons MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Industry, Science and Technology</td>
<td>The Hon Karen Andrews MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction</td>
<td>The Hon Angus Taylor MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia</td>
<td>The Hon Keith Pitt MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Defence Minister</td>
<td>The Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Industry</td>
<td>The Hon Melissa Price MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Families and Social Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme</td>
<td>The Hon Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services</td>
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<td>The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence</td>
<td>Mr Pat Conroy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Industry</td>
<td>Mr Matt Keogh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Mr Pat Conroy MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
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<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Tony Burke MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Carers</td>
<td>Ms Emma McBride MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ms Emma McBride MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Constitutional Reform</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Seniors</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Women</strong></td>
<td>Ms Ged Kearney MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Aged Care</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Employment and Industry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Science</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Small and Family Business</strong></td>
<td>Ms Clare O'Neil MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Technology and the Future of Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Small and Family Business</td>
<td>Mr Matt Keogh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness</td>
<td>The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for External Territories</td>
<td>Mr Josh Wilson MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ms Madeleine King MP</td>
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Thursday, 18 June 2020

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:30, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

MOTIONS

Automotive Industry

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (09:31): I seek leave to move the following motion:

That the House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) on the 17th February 2020 General Motors announced the retirement of the Holden Brand in Australia; and
   (b) the Government’s free trade agreements have destroyed our Australian manufacturing industry;
(2) acknowledges that the Government must build our way out of a COVID-19 economic depression with ‘make money’ projects; and
(3) calls on the Government to:
   (a) support the reestablishment of an Australian car manufacturing industry with a majority Australian shareholding; and
   (b) put relevant policies in place to ensure that all cars purchased by the Federal Government are made in Australia.

Leave not granted.

Mr KATTER: I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Kennedy from moving the following motion:

That the House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) on the 17th February 2020 General Motors announced the retirement of the Holden Brand in Australia; and
   (b) the Government’s free trade agreements have destroyed our Australian manufacturing industry;
(2) acknowledges that the Government must build our way out of a COVID-19 economic depression with ‘make money’ projects; and
(3) calls on the Government to:
   (a) support the reestablishment of an Australian car manufacturing industry with a majority Australian shareholding; and
   (b) put relevant policies in place to ensure that all cars purchased by the Federal Government are made in Australia.

I ask the government to allow me to say a few words on it. I appreciate my colleague from Hobart, who will be seconding this motion.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (09:33): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is the member for Kennedy be no further heard.

The House divided. [09:38]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....................56
Noes .....................50
Majority ...............6

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hawke, AG
Kelly, C
Ley, SP

CHAMBER
AYES

Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O'Brien, T
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
Webster, AE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Murphy, PJ
O'Neil, CE
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Templeman, SR
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH

Aly, A
B Bowen, CE
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mulino, D
O'Connor, BPJ
Payne, AE
Pilberserk, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swanson, MJ
Thwaites, KL
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

PAIRS

Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Landry, ML
Marino, NB
Morton, B
O'Brien, LS
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP

Bird, SL
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Chesters, LM
Clare, JD
Dreyfus, MA
Elliot, MJ
Georganas, S
Kearney, G
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Rowland, MA
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakousi, M
Watts, TG
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (09:45): Is the motion moved by the member for Kennedy seconded?

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (09:44): I second the motion moved by the gallant member for Kennedy. And if I can just add, it beggars belief that the government gagged the member for Kennedy when all he is trying to do is focus the—

The SPEAKER: The member for Clark will just resume his seat. The minister seeking the call?

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (09:44): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member be no longer heard.

The House divided. [09:46]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 56
Noes ...................... 50
Majority ................ 6

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Fallinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Lilieproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

Noes -------------------

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Murphy, PJ
O’Neil, CE

Aly, A
Bowen, CE
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mulino, D
O’Connor, BPJ
Payne, AE
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (09:50): The question now is that the motion moved by the member for Kennedy be disagreed to.

The House divided. [09:50]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....................56
Noes .....................51
Majority ....................5

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN (teller)
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hawke, AG
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, T
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
AYES
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T
Webster, AE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Freelander, MR
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mulino, D
O’Connor, BPJ
Payne, AE
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swanson, MJ (teller)
Thwaites, KL
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

PAIRS
Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Landry, ML
Marino, NB
Morton, B
O’Brien, LS
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP

Bird, SL
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Chesters, LM
Clare, JD
Dreyfus, MA
Elliot, MJ
Georganas, S
Kearney, G
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Rowland, MA
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakou, M
Watts, TG

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES
Government Response

The SPEAKER (09:51): For the information of honourable members, I present a schedule of the status of government responses to committee reports as at 17 June 2020. The schedule will be incorporated in Hansard.

The schedule read as follows—

SPEAKER’S SCHEDULE OF THE STATUS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE REPORTS

CHAMBER
The Speaker's schedule to the House of Representatives on the status of government responses to committee reports is presented at six monthly intervals, usually in the last sitting weeks of the winter and spring sittings. The schedule presents a list of committee reports that contain recommendations requiring a government response. Government responses received during the period are included in the schedule and the report it relates to is then removed from subsequent schedules. The last schedule was presented in the House on 5 December 2019.

The timeframe for government responses to committee reports in this schedule is determined by the resolution adopted by the House on 29 September 2010, in which government responses to House and Joint committee reports are required within a six month period from the presentation of the report in the House. The Senate has resolved to require government responses to Senate and Joint committee reports within three months of a report being tabled (A).

This schedule does not list reports that do not require a government response. In the past, the practice was to include all reports tabled in the House in the Speaker's schedule. However, the intent of this schedule is to provide an update to the House on the status of government responses to committee reports.

The schedule does not include advisory reports on bills introduced into the House of Representatives unless the reports make recommendations that are wider than the provision of the bill and would therefore be the subject of a government response. The Government's response to bill inquiry reports is apparent in the resumption of consideration of the relevant legislation by the House. Also not included are reports from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, the House of Representatives Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests, and the Publications Committee (other than reports on inquiries). Government responses to reports of the Public Works Committee are usually reflected in motions for the approval of works after the relevant report has been presented and considered. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' regular scrutiny reports on the human rights compatibility of bills and legislative instruments are not listed, as the timeframe for a response is specified in correspondence to the relevant minister.

Reports of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit primarily make administrative recommendations but may make policy recommendations. A government response is required in respect of such policy recommendations made by the committee. Responses to administrative recommendations are made in the form of an Executive Minute provided to, and subsequently tabled by, the committee. Agencies responding to administrative recommendations are required to provide an Executive Minute within six months of the tabling of a report. Executive Minutes are included in this schedule.

The table below provides a summary of government responses received and outstanding to committee reports of the 43rd to 46th Parliaments inclusive.

(A) This practice has arisen from a Senate resolution of 14 March 1973, in which the Senate declared its opinion that the government should provide a response to committee reports within three months of tabling. Successive governments have affirmed their commitment to providing such responses.

Listed below (see table below) are responses received (since tabling of the last schedule on 5 December 2019) and outstanding (as at 17 June 2020):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Awaiting response (time expired)</th>
<th>Awaiting response (time not expired)</th>
<th>Response received (time expired)</th>
<th>Response received (time not expired)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43rd</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>44th</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>45th</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>46th</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Report</th>
<th>Date Tabled or Published (1)</th>
<th>Date of Government Response (2)</th>
<th>Responded in Period Specified (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Industry (House, Standing)</td>
<td>4/5/16</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Water Resources (House, Standing)</td>
<td>20/12/17</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-charging Australian Agriculture</td>
<td>11/12/18(*)</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia Fund Establishment (Joint, Select)</td>
<td>25/6/15</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (Joint, Statutory)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAMBER
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Response Status</th>
<th>Time Expired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrity of overseas Commonwealth law enforcement operations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>24/6/13</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inquiry into the jurisdiction of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/5/16</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examination of the Annual Report of the Integrity Commissioner 2016-17</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications and the Arts (House, Standing)</strong></td>
<td>Report on the inquiry into the Australian film and television industry</td>
<td>7/12/17</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report on the inquiry into the Australian music industry</td>
<td>2/4/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Next Gen Future: Inquiry into the deployment, adoption and application of 5G in Australia</td>
<td>12/5/20</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>Time not expired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Joint, Select)</strong></td>
<td>Progress report 4</td>
<td>27/10/14</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>25/6/15</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Joint, Select)</strong></td>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>29/11/18</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corporations and Financial Services (Joint, Statutory)</strong></td>
<td>Inquiry into the Impairment of Customer Loans date</td>
<td>4/5/16</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inquiry into the Life Insurance Industry</td>
<td>27/3/18</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Options for greater involvement by private sector life insurers in worker rehabilitation</td>
<td>24/10/18</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory Oversight of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, the Takeovers Panel and the Corporations Legislation: Report No. 1</td>
<td>14/2/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairness in franchising</td>
<td>14/3/19(*)</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report on the 2017-2018 annual reports of bodies established under the ASIC Act</td>
<td>2/4/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regulation of auditing in Australia: Interim Report date</td>
<td>27/2/20</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economics (House, Standing)</strong></td>
<td>Review of the Four Major Banks (Third Report) date</td>
<td>7/12/17</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report on the inquiry into the implications of removing refundable franking credits</td>
<td>4/4/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report on the inquiry into impediments to business investment</td>
<td>4/4/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advisory report on the Banking Amendment (Rural Finance Reform) Bill 2019</td>
<td>5/3/20</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>Time not expired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electoral Matters (Joint, Standing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second interim report on the inquiry into the
conduct of the 2013 federal election: An
assessment of electronic voting options 20/11/14 No response to
date No

The 2013 Federal Election: Report on the
conduct of the 2013 election and matters
related thereto 15/4/15 No response to
date No

Third interim report on the inquiry into the
conduct of the 2016 federal election: AEC
modernisation 21/6/17 No response to
date No

Excluded: The impact of section 44 on
Australian democracy 17/5/18 No response to
date No

Report on the conduct of the 2016 federal
election and matters related thereto 5/12/18 No response to
date No

Interim report on all aspects of the conduct
of the 2019 Federal Election and matters
related thereto: Delegation to the
International Grand Committee, Dublin,
Ireland 15/5/20(*) No response to
date Time not expired

### Employment, Education and Training (House, Standing)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry and Creativity</th>
<th>19/6/17</th>
<th>No response to date</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Individuals, Broad Skills</td>
<td>30/5/18</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government funding arrangements for non-NHMRC research</td>
<td>26/11/18</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status of the teaching profession</td>
<td>28/11/19</td>
<td>No response to date</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Environment (House, Standing)

| Streamlining environmental legislation: Inquiry into streamlining environmental regulation, 'green date tape', and one stop shops | 23/2/15 | No response to date | No |
| Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations | 4/5/16 | No response to date | No |

### Environment and Energy (House, Standing)

| Living with fruit bats: Inquiry into flying-fox management in the eastern states | 27/2/17 | No response to date | No |
| Powering our future: Inquiry into modernising Australia's electricity grid | 5/2/18 | No response to date | No |
| Report on the inquiry into the management and use of Commonwealth environmental water | 7/12/18 | 5/2/20 | No |
| Cane toads on the march: Inquiry into controlling the spread of cane toads | 26/3/19(*) | 13/5/20 | No |
| Not without your approval: a way forward for nuclear technology in Australia: Report of the inquiry into the prerequisites for nuclear energy in Australia | 13/12/19(*) | No response to date | No |

### Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (Joint, Standing)

<p>| Modern slavery and global supply chains - interim report | 17/8/17 | No response to date | No |
| Hidden in Plain Sight: An inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia | 7/12/17 | No response to date | No |
| Inquiry into the management of PFAS contamination in and around Defence bases | 3/12/18 | 28/2/20(<em>) | No |
| Inquiry into human organ trafficking and organ transplant tourism. | 3/12/18 | No response to date | No |
| From little things big things grow: Supporting Australian SMEs go global | 14/2/19 | 9/12/19(</em>) | No |
| Inquiry into transition from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) | 3/4/19 | No response to date | No |
| Second Interim Report: freedom of religion and belief, the Australian experience | 3/4/19 | No response to date | No |
| First report: Inquiry into Australia's aid program in the Indo-Pacific | 3/4/19 | No response to date | No |
| <strong>Health (House, Standing)</strong> | | | |
| Inquiry into Chronic Disease Prevention and Management in Primary Health Care | 5/5/16 | No response to date | No |
| <strong>Health and Ageing (House, Standing)</strong> | | | |
| Lost in the labyrinth: Report on the inquiry into registration processes and support for overseas trained doctors | 19/3/12 | No response to date | No |
| Bridging the dental gap: Report on the inquiry into adult dental services | 17/6/13 | No response to date | No |
| <strong>Health, Aged Care and Sport (House, Standing)</strong> | | | |
| Report on the Inquiry into the Use and Marketing of Electronic Cigarettes and Personal Vaporisers in Australia | 28/3/18 | 17/6/20 | No |
| Report on the inquiry into Biotoxin-related Illnesses in Australia | 17/10/18 | 4/3/20 | No |
| Bedtime Reading: Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia | 4/4/19 | No response to date | No |
| Walking the allergy tightrope: Addressing the rise of allergies and anaphylaxis in Australia | 15/6/20 | No response to date | Time has not expired |
| <strong>Human Rights (Joint, Statutory)</strong> | | | |
| 2016 Review of Stronger Futures measures: Final Report | 16/3/16 | No response to date | No |
| Freedom of speech in Australia: Inquiry into the operation of Part IIA of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) and related procedures under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) | 28/2/17 | Partial response | No |
| Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019 | 13/11/19 | 4/3/20 | Yes |
| <strong>Indigenous Affairs (House, Standing)</strong> | | | |
| Interim report: First steps for improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students | 4/5/16 | No response to date | No |
| The power of education from surviving to thriving: Educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students | 15/12/17 | No response to date | No |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee and Inquiry</th>
<th>Date of Report</th>
<th>Date of Response</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report on the impact of inauthentic art and craft in the style of First Nations peoples</td>
<td>19/12/18(*)</td>
<td>No response to</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry, Innovation, Science &amp; Resources (House, Standing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep it in the regions: Mining and resources industry support for businesses in regional economies</td>
<td>3/12/18</td>
<td>No response to</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure, Transport and Cities (House, Standing)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Smart ICT: Report on the inquiry into the role of smart ICT in the design and planning of infrastructure</td>
<td>15/3/16</td>
<td>No response to</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building up &amp; Moving Out</td>
<td>17/9/18</td>
<td>12/5/20</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovating Transport across Australia</td>
<td>2/4/19</td>
<td>No response to</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>date</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation of the National Redress Scheme (Joint, Select)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>First Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme April 2020</td>
<td>1/5/20</td>
<td>No response to</td>
<td>Time not expired</td>
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<tr>
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<td>An inquiry into human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices</td>
<td>18/7/17</td>
<td>No response to</td>
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<td>Inquiry into crystal methamphetamine (ice): First Report</td>
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<td>Inquiry into crystal methamphetamine (ice): Final Report</td>
<td>27/3/18</td>
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<td>Examination of the Australian Federal Police Annual Report 2015-16</td>
<td>28/3/18</td>
<td>No response to</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Inquiry into the trade in elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn</td>
<td>19/9/18</td>
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<td>Impact of new and emerging information and communications technology</td>
<td>4/4/19</td>
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<td>Theft and export of motor vehicles and parts</td>
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<td>No response to</td>
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<td>No response to</td>
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CHAMBER
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<th>Progress</th>
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<td>NDIS Planning Interim Report</td>
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<td><strong>Oversight of the implementation of redress related recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Joint, Select)</strong></td>
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<td>Report 463: Commonwealth Financial Statements</td>
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<td>Partial response received</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Report 472: Commonwealth Procurement - Second Report</td>
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<td>Partial response received</td>
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<td>Report 475: Defence First Principles Review, Naval Construction and Mental Health in the AFP</td>
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<td>Report 477: Commonwealth Financial Statements - Second Report, and Foreign Investment in Real Estate</td>
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<td>Report 479: Australian Government Security Arrangements</td>
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<td>Partial response received</td>
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<td><strong>Public Works (Joint, Standing)</strong></td>
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<td>Report 2/2019</td>
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<td><strong>Tax and Revenue (House, Standing)</strong></td>
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Taxpayer Engagement with the Tax System 10/9/18 13/2/20 No
2017 annual report of the Australian Taxation Office: Fairness, functions and frameworks—Performance review 21/2/19 No response to date No
Trade and Investment Growth (Joint, Select)
Inquiry into Australia's Future Research and Innovation 3/5/16 No response to date No
Trade transformation: Supporting Australia's export and investment opportunities 10/6/20 No response to date Time not expired
Treaties (Joint, Standing)
Report 186: IA-CEPA and A-HKFTA 9/10/19(*) 19/2/20* Yes

(*): Presented out of session

Notes
1. The date of tabling is the date the report was presented to the House of Representatives or to the Speaker, whichever is earlier. In the case of joint committees, the date shown is the date of first presentation to either the House or the Senate or to the President or Speaker (if presented earlier out of session). Reports published when the House (or Houses) are not sitting are tabled at a later date.
2. If the source for the government response date is not the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives or the Journals of the Senate, the source is shown in an endnote.
3. The Government has undertaken to respond to committee reports within a six month period—see House of Representatives Standing Orders, resolution of the House of Representatives of 29 September 2010. This resolution also puts in place additional steps for reports not responded to within that six month period. The period from when the 44th Parliament was prorogued on 9 May 2016 to the commencement of the 45th Parliament on 30 August 2016 is not included in the response period. The period from when the 45th Parliament was prorogued on 11 April 2019 to the commencement of the 46th Parliament on 2 July 2019 is not included in the response period.

BUSINESS
Rearrangement
Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (09:52): I move: That business intervening before order of the day No. 1, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (09:52): The government has consulted in the appropriate way on this bill, and we're happy to support the postponement.

Question agreed to.

BILLS
Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 3) Bill 2020
Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion: That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (09:53): The Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 3) Bill 2020 bill contains six measures relating to various aspects of Treasury legislation. They are sensible measures, in the main, that Labor supports. I'll delve into each of the measures in a bit of detail.

Schedules 1 and 3 make a range of minor amendments to the International Monetary Agreements Act 1947 to account for changes in the way that the International Monetary Fund conducts business and provides aid to developing countries. Under the current arrangements, the trigger event for a country-specific funding arrangement is an IMF request. The opposition is advised that the IMF will be reverting to a different set of arrangements whereby they will no longer be making a country-specific request, so we need to change our domestic arrangements to enable the minister and the governments to facilitate country-specific funding arrangements. These amendments will allow for new agreements to be struck by the minister without legislative amendments. However, any such agreement will be subject to the normal processes relating to international treaties and subject to extensive scrutiny by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, as is appropriate in the normal course of events.

Labor have always supported Australia’s role as a member of the international community. The very act that this bill amends—the International Monetary Agreements Act 1947—was put in place after World War II by one of Australia’s greatest Labor governments, the Chifley government. Since then, Labor have been unwavering in
our commitment to the cause of positive global engagement and international aid. We see it as absolutely central to our national interests.

I'm encouraged by the government's decision on this bill. I encourage them to continue to work with developing countries and support the important work of multilateral development organisations. I hope that it preludes a change in the posture of our relations as a country with international bodies—a step away from the vacuous slogans of negative globalism to constructive engagement and active engagement, which are absolutely in our national interest. In these troubled international times, Australia, as a middle-ranking power, absolutely has an interest in ensuring that our international organisations—whether it's the International Monetary Fund or the World Health Organization—are functioning in the manner in which it is intended. So vacuous slogans about negative globalism have no role to play in our international posturing and engagement. I welcome the fact that these amendments are included in this bill.

Schedule 4 sets out an extension to the instant asset write-off provisions included in the coronavirus economic response package. This will allow businesses of less than $500 million aggregated turnover to claim an immediate deduction for depreciating assets that cost up to $1,500. I encourage businesses to take it up but fear that there is an understandable, if not a rational, uncertainty and reluctance for many businesses to accrue further debt, whether that is through paying for new equipment outright or whether it's through going to their bank and seeking further credit facilities to purchase new assets. We encourage them to think otherwise. But, with all the uncertainty around the economy over the next few months, their reticence is rational and understandable.

If we have a look at the data that has been provided to many members of this place by the Australian Banking Association, we can see that there are about $60 billion worth of loan deferrals that will expire at some time between September and October this year and then increasingly over the following six months. This is adding to the uncertainty visited upon business and the uncertainty around the future settings for jobseeker and JobKeeper, and I can only use this opportunity to encourage the government to remove that uncertainty and to ensure businesses have the basis on which they can do future planning.

After discussing with many businesses in my electorate, I know for a fact that they are currently in discussions with their banks about the forward aspects of their loan deferrals. One part of those discussions is going to involve questions like: 'What's your projected income? What are your projected salary costs? How are you going to meet your expected expenses? How does your loan deferral feed into that complex set of assessments?' So certainty is absolutely critical. We'd argue that we can't wait until July. The sooner the government gives certainty to business about important government programs such as JobKeeper and the sooner we get more certainty around the capacity of certain industries to move to a more normalised operating set of arrangements—whether that's international tourism, the arts and entertainment sector or the hospitality sector—the sooner these businesses can get back to trading as normal, employing Australians and creating wealth and livelihoods for all Australians. It is in all of our interests that we have greater certainty around these issues.

I will now turn to schedule 4, which amends the Taxation Administration Act to reduce the GDP adjustment factor in the PAYG system for 2020-21. This is another measure that will do something to help small businesses but it is a modest measure, I have to say. The GDP adjustment factor sets instalment estimates for small businesses, and adjusting the factor means that small businesses won't be beholden to the estimates that assume an economy is doing much better than it actually is. It's not going to do anything to change the ultimate amount of tax that small businesses owe, so over the forward estimates this has a net fiscal impact of zero. While that is sensible, it's not going to change the world for any small businesses. Great certainty around forward settings around government programs are going to have a much greater impact on that.

Schedule 6 fixes a technical area in boosting cash flow for employers that was a part of the Coronavirus Economic Response Package to ensure that the cash-flow boost can go to all small businesses that are employing staff. It fixes a drafting error that means certain businesses wouldn't be able to count personal service income which is akin to wages withheld when calculating the cash boost credit. It's an easy fix to a mistake that frankly is understandable, and Labor supports the fix.

Let's go back to schedule 2. Schedule 2 provides tax deductible gifts to a range of organisations, including, importantly, the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial. It is worth pausing for a moment, given the national and international conversation around these matters, to remind the House of what this organisation is about. In this place, at the heart of our nation, on the land of the Ngunawal people, it's important to note exactly what the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial are memorialising. On 10 June 1838, a group of Wirrayaraay people, a tribal clan of the Gamilaraay nation were camping peacefully on what had become Myall Creek Station. They had camped on the station for several weeks in the midst of the frontier wars. Gangs of marauding white stockmen were roaming the district, slaughtering any Aboriginal people they could find. The station stockman, one Charles...
Kilminister, had allowed them to camp on the land while accepting their assistance with the station's work. This was quite a common arrangement at the time, but this didn't create a safe haven.

Just before sunset on 10 June, the Wirrayaraya people were preparing for their evening meal when a gang of 11 stockmen rode into their camp. The people tried to flee, but the stockmen easily cornered them in the station's hut. The men, women and children were tied up and dragged off by the marauding gang. Once brought to a gully, the stockmen, joined by their theoretical protector, Charles Kilminister, murdered almost all of them immediately, keeping one woman alive for a few more days. Can you imagine the torture? The details of the massacre are graphic and horrific, as are too many stories from that period in our history.

The reason we remember this massacre, unlike so many others, is that this was one of the rare instances of settler violence where the white perpetrators were punished. A neighbouring settler, Frederick Foot, travelled all the way to Sydney to inform the New South Wales government of the massacre of the people. Against all the odds, the government acted. The 11 members of the gang of stockmen were brought to trial in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and seven of them were ultimately found guilty. It shouldn't have been against the odds. Justice for Aboriginal Australians should not have been a surprise, but it was. All too often it still is.

The retelling of this history can be confronting for European Australians. For the descendants of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community it's as necessary as it is painful, because today they see the echo of that violence and dispossession in the refusal of this generation of Australians to acknowledge that this is a part of our history. In acknowledging that history, we give ourselves the capacity as a nation to move on. We have not closed the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. We have not closed the gap on Indigenous suffering. We have not closed the gap on Indigenous injustice. It is no answer to these claims to say, 'But, yes, there is violence inside Aboriginal communities as well.' Of course there is, and the leaders within those communities are doing their utmost to confront these issues, as we must confront our history and do all that we can to work with the leaders to ensure that we can move forward together to close these gaps. This is why it's worthy that we continue to remember these instances in our history, including the massacre at Myall Creek. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing ) (10:06): Thank you to the shadow minister for his contribution and support of the important measures contained in this bill. The Morrison government continues to back small business by extending the $150,000 instant asset write-off for six months to 31 December 2020. For most small businesses, indeed, for most Australians that will be seen by them as the centrepiece of the Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 3) Bill.

Schedule 1 of the bill, as has been noted by the shadow minister, makes important amendments to the International Monetary Agreements Act and will enable Australia to enter into loan agreements with the IMF, following changes to the way that they will be administering requests for that assistance.

Schedule 2 of the bill, as the shadow minister finished up with, includes a number of deductible gift recipients, including for, as I'm sure many members around the House know, Toy Libraries Australia, an important institution that covers this country from top to bottom; the Samuel Griffith Society; and, of course, the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial.

Schedule 3 of the bill amends the International Monetary Agreements Act to remove the requirement for the IMF to directly request assistance for a third country, as those requests are no longer made. This change will ensure that Australia can take its rightful place as a leader, particularly in the Pacific, in supporting third countries that are very close to us.

As I began at the outset, schedule 4 contains the extension to the $150,000 instant asset write-off to 31 December 2020 for businesses with aggregated turnover of less than $500 million. Eligible businesses will have, therefore, additional time to invest in assets to support their business as they begin emerging from the coronavirus, and we would absolutely encourage them to take those decisions as we move out of the worst of the pandemic. They should have the confidence to take those decisions, and this will assist them to do so.

Schedule 5 to the bill suspends the indexation of tax instalment amounts based on historical nominal GDP outcomes. It is self-evident that the economy and the impact of the coronavirus means that providing that cash-flow support through removing indexation will be so important to so many businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises. This will obviously better align the PAYG system with the current economic conditions.

Schedule 6 to the bill makes some very minor amendments to the cash-flow boost legislation, which seeks to clarify that the cash-flow boost credit includes amounts of personal services income that have been withheld. That is consistent with our understanding and policy and ensures that the legislation provides the commissioner with the ability to administer the cash-flow boost in that way. We thank the opposition for their support of the bill and we commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (10:11): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

COMMITTEES

Road Safety Joint Select Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell) (10:11): The Speaker has received a message from the Senate informing the House that Senator Sterle as a member and Senator Gallagher as a participating member have been discharged from the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety and that Senator Gallagher as a member and Senator Sterle as a participating member have been appointed members of that committee.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE

COVID-19: Arts and Entertainment Industry

Consideration of Senate Message

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell) (10:12): The Speaker has received the following message from the Senate:
The Senate transmits to the House of Representatives the following resolution which was agreed to by the Senate:
That the Senate—
(a) notes that:
   (i) it has been more than three months since COVID-19 physical distancing rules effectively shut down the arts and entertainment industry overnight;
   (ii) hundreds of thousands of workers in the arts and entertainment industry have been impacted; and
   (iii) the Morrison Government has not announced any specific industry assistance for arts and entertainment; and
(b) calls on the Morrison Government to detail and deliver a recovery package for the arts and entertainment industry.
The Senate requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives in this resolution.
Ordered that the message be considered immediately.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (10:12): I move:
That consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (10:12): I move:
That all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting the following words 'That the message be considered immediately.'

It has been a fortnight since the Prime Minister announced a package would be coming for the entertainment industry—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Melbourne will resume his seat.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (10:12): I move:
That the member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Leader of the Greens be no further heard.

The House divided. [10:17]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 56
Noes ...................... 52
Majority ............... 4

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D

AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Conaghan, PJ

CHAMBER
AYES

Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hawke, AG
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O'Brien, T
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
Webster, AE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Fitzgibbon, JA
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Murphy, PJ
O'Neil, CE
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Templeman, SR
Wells, AS
Wilson, TR

Aly, A
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Freelander, MR (teller)
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Koech, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mulino, D
O'Connor, BPJ
Payne, AE
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swanson, MJ
Thwaites, KL
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

PAIRS

Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Joyce, BT

Bird, SL
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Chesters, LM
Clare, JD
Dreyfus, MA
Elliot, MJ
Georganas, S
Keary, G
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
Pairings

| Laming, A | Owens, JA |
| Landry, ML | Perrett, GD |
| Marino, NB | Rowland, MA |
| Morton, B | Smith, DPB |
| O'Brien, LS | Stanley, AM |
| Wicks, LE | Thistlethwaite, MJ |
| Wilson, RJ | Vamvakou, M |
| Wood, JP | Watts, TG |

Question agreed to.

The Speaker (10:20): Is the motion seconded?

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (10:20): I second this motion. The arts play a central part in the way we live—

The Speaker: The member for Warringah will resume her seat. The Leader of the House?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (10:20): I move:

That the question be put.

The Speaker: The Leader of the House has moved that the question be put.

The House divided. [10:22]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................56
Noes .................52
Majority .............4

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM

Aly, A
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
NOES

Fitzgibbon, JA
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Murphy, PJ
O’Neil, CE
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Templeman, SR
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH
Freelander, MR (teller)
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Koengh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mulino, D
O’Connor, BPJ
Payne, AE
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swanson, MJ
Thwaites, KL
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

PAIRS

Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Landry, ML
Marino, NB
Morton, B
O’Brien, LS
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Bird, SL
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Chesters, LM
Clare, JD
Dreyfus, MA
Elliott, MJ
Georganas, S
Kearney, G
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Rowland, MA
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Watts, TG

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (10:23): The question now is that the motion moved by the minister be agreed to. The Leader of the Greens on a point of order?

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (10:23): I understand that the point was made yesterday about a gag being moved midway through, but I moved an amendment and that amendment was seconded so the question should—

The SPEAKER: No—

Mr BANDT: When the minister moved that the question be put, the question before the House was my amendment.

The SPEAKER: Yes, but until that question, as I said yesterday, has been moved, seconded and then I have stated that it is the question before the House, it is not the question. The question before the House is the original question. It’s made very, very clear in the House of Representatives Practice, with all the precedents, that a closure motion can be moved during the moving of an amendment, the seconding of an amendment, until such time as that seconding is complete and I say, ‘The question is that the amendment be agreed to.’ Up until that point, the closure applies.

I know the member for Melbourne has raised this a number of times. I suggest that he has a close look at the page in Practice with all the precedents.
Mr Burke: That being the case, it would be appreciated if you could restate the actual question that is before us, because it's my understanding that if there's a no vote on the question that's now before us it would have the same impact as the amendment would have had.

The SPEAKER: The question before the House is the original question moved by the minister: that consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Mr Burke: So it effectively puts off the consideration of the issue.

The SPEAKER: It does exactly what the motion says; it's an order of the day for the next sitting. I hope that clarifies things for the member for Melbourne. I will send around the page; it's probably easier if I do that. So the question is that the motion moved by the minister that consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting be agreed to.

The House divided. [10:26]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................56
Noes ..................51
Majority .............5

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Freelander, MR (teller)
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mulino, D

Aly, A
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Hasie, EN
Katter, RC
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Murphy, PJ
Question agreed to.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (10:29): I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Member for Grayndler moving the disallowance motion on Australia Post which appears on the Notice Paper as private Members’ business notice No. 40, and for the matter to be determined by the House.

We have attempted to move this disallowance each day, because it needs to be dealt with—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (10:29): I move:

That the member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Leader of the Opposition be no further heard.

Mr Bandt interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I would just point out to the Leader of the Greens the specific words in Practice, which will help:

If the closure is moved and agreed to while a Member is moving or seconding (where necessary) an amendment—that is, before the question on the amendment is proposed from the Chair—the amendment is superseded, and the question on the original question is put immediately.

The House divided. [10:33]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ......................56
Noes ......................51
Majority ...............5
AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharman, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Freelander, MR (teller)
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Leigh, AK
McBrady, EM
Mulino, D
O'Connor, BPJ
Payne, AE
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swanson, MJ
Thwaites, KL
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

PAIRS

Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Hastie, AW

Bird, SL
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Chesters, LM
Clare, JD
Dreyfus, MA
Elliot, MJ
PAIRS

Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Landry, ML
Marino, NB
Morton, B
O’Brien, LS
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP

Georganas, S
Kearney, G
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Rowland, MA
Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Watts, TG

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (10:36): Is the motion seconded? The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (10:35): Seconded. They spend more time voting to shut down debate than they vote to protect jobs. Go back to your electorates and tell them this was your—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Leader of the House.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (10:35): I move:

That the member no longer be heard.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has moved that the Manager of Opposition Business be no further heard.

The House divided. [10:37]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................56
Noes .................51
Majority .............5

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Simmonds, J
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hawke, AG
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, T
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
Webster, AE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Aly, A

CHAMBER
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be disagreed to. I call the member for Chifley.

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (10:38): Blackmores donated nearly $100,000 to the coalition; it's no wonder they're protecting one of their former employees.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (10:38): I move
That the question be put.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be now put.
The House divided, [10:39]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ..................... 56
Noes .................... 50
Majority .................6

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MJ
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Freelander, MR (teller)
Gorman, P
Haines, H
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Murphy, PJ
O'Neil, CE
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Templeman, SR
Wells, AS
Wilson, IH

PAIRS

Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ

Bird, SL
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Chesters, LM
Clare, JD
Dreyfus, MA

CHAMBER
The SPEAKER (10:41): The question now is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition for the suspension of standing orders be disagreed to.

The Speaker—[10:43]

Ayes .................58
Noes ....................48
Majority .............10

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hunt, GA
Leeson, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Simmonds, J
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Freelander, MR (teller)
Gorman, P

Aly, A
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Question agreed to.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 2) Bill 2020

Consideration of Senate Message

Message received from the Senate returning the bill and acquainting the House that the Senate, having considered message No. 225 of the House of Representatives, has resolved to press its request for its amendments and again requests the House to make the amendments.

Ordered that the requested amendments be considered immediately.

Senate’s requested amendments—

(1) Clause 2, page 2 (at the end of the table), add:
6. Schedule 7 The day after this Act receives the Royal Assent.

(2) Page 29 (after line 10), at the end of the bill, add:

Schedule 7—Financial reporting obligations for large proprietary companies

Part 1—Repeal of instrument

ASIC Corporations (Exempt Proprietary Companies) Instrument 2015/840

1 The whole of the instrument

Repeal the instrument.

Part 2—Grandfathered exemption

Corporations Act 2001
2 Subsection 1408(6) (table item 7)
Repeal the table item.

Part 3—Application

3 Application

(1) This item applies to a company if, immediately before the commencement of this item, the company was exempted from complying with subsection 319(1) of the Corporations Act 2001 by the ASIC Corporations (Exempt Proprietary Companies) Instrument 2015/840.

(2) Despite the amendments made by Parts 1 and 2, that exemption continues to apply to the company in relation to the 2019-20 financial year.

4 Instruments that provide relief from requirements of Corporations Act—Lodgment of annual reports by large proprietary companies

(1) Despite anything contained in the Corporations Act 2001, ASIC may not make a legislative instrument, however described, if that legislative instrument would have the effect of relieving the class of companies referred to in subitem (2) of the requirement to comply with subsection 319(1) of the Act for a financial year.

(2) The class of companies is the class of large proprietary companies that was relieved from the requirement to comply with subsection 319(1) of the Corporations Act 2001 due to the operation of the ASIC Corporations (Exempt Proprietary Companies) Instrument 2015/840 as in force immediately before the commencement of this Schedule.

Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (10:46): I move:

That the House insist on disagreeing to the amendments insisted on by the Senate.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House insist on disagreeing to the amendments insisted on by the Senate.

The House divided. [10:51]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....................54
Noes .....................49
Majority ................5

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hawke, AG
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, TJ
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharma, DN
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, TR
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Burke, AS

CHAMBER
Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (10:58): On behalf of the Assistant Treasurer I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Armoured Fighting Vehicles Facilities Program—Stage 1.

The Department of Defence proposes to provide fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure to support and train Army personnel on the next generation of armoured fighting vehicle capability being procured for the Australian Defence Force. The project is the first stage of several proposed stages to deliver facilities under a rolling program of work. The project proposes to deliver works at the Puckapunyal military area in Victoria, at Lavarack Barracks Queensland and the Edinburgh Defence Precinct South Australia in support of the Armoured Fighting Vehicles Capability Program. Under this program, the Australian Army will replace its current fleet of armoured fighting vehicle platforms over the next decade and acquire a new armoured engineering capability. The proposed works
are within the Defence estate and will bring economic stimulus to the three locations around Australia, with expected employment opportunities for local subcontractors. The proposed works will comply with the relevant standards and regulations. The estimated cost of the works is $235.1 million, including Defence contingency.

The project was referred to the PWC on 27 November 2019. The committee has recommended that the House of Representatives resolve, pursuant to section 18(7) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, that it is expedient to carry out the project. Subject to parliamentary approval, construction activities are expected to commence in mid-2020 and be completed by 2023.

On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for undertaking a timely inquiry, and I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (11:01): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority—National Education Centre, Reef HQ.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is proposing to undertake works at the National Education Centre for the Great Barrier Reef's Reef HQ Aquarium. Reef HQ was opened in 1987 as a bicentennial community project to create a living example of a coral reef on land to showcase science and to deliver education about marine science, heritage and other reef values. The proposed works will address identified safety and operational concerns associated with Reef HQ's ageing infrastructure in order to allow for the facility's continued safe operation. This, in turn, will allow for the continued provision of educational and informational services to the wider community. The estimated cost of the works, to be undertaken over four years from 2019-20, is $26.9 million, excluding GST, with ongoing funding of $1.8 million from 2023-24 for critical capital works.

The project was referred to the PWC on 19 February 2020 and the committee made two recommendations: (a) that Reef HQ is provided with additional funding for the purposes of updating its exhibits and technology to enable it to maintain its excellence in education, research and tourism; and (b) that the House of Representatives resolve, pursuant to section 18(7) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, that it is expedient to carry out the project. Subject to parliamentary approval, construction activities are expected to commence in mid-2020 and to be completed by mid-2023.

On behalf of the government, I'd like to thank the committee for undertaking a timely inquiry, and I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (11:03): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Land 121 Stage 5B Facilities Project.

The Department of Defence proposes to deliver new and refurbished facilities to support and sustain vehicles, modules and trailers being procured for the Australian Defence Force under this project. The project proposes to deliver works at six locations across Australia: Derwent Barracks in Tasmania; Campbell Barracks in Western Australia; Puckapunyal Military Area in Victoria; Robertson Barracks in the Northern Territory; and Lavarack Barracks and Gallipoli Barracks in Queensland. The proposed works are within the Defence Estate and will bring economic stimulus to these locations, with expected employment opportunities for local subcontractors. The proposed works will comply with the relevant standards and regulations. The estimated cost of the works is $183.3 million, including Defence contingency.

The project was referred to the PWC on 27 November 2019. The committee's report was tabled in the House of Representatives on 10 June 2020 and in the Senate on 11 June 2020. The committee has recommended that the House of Representatives resolve, pursuant to section 18(7) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, that it is expedient to carry out the project. Subject to parliamentary approval, construction activities are expected to commence in mid-2021 and be completed by mid-2024. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for undertaking a timely inquiry, and I commend this motion to the House.

Question agreed to.
Migration Joint Committee

Report

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (11:05): On behalf of Joint Standing Committee on Migration, I present the committee's report entitled Report of the inquiry into migration in regional Australia.

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr LEESER: by leave—On Monday the member for Calwell and I made statements about the migration committee report into migration in regional Australia. Today I am pleased to present that report.

This inquiry was originally referred to the committee in August 2019. Since that time, both Australia and the world have undergone massive changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these changes and their impact on the Australian economy and the flow of migrants, the committee determined it was best to conclude the inquiry rather than continue with the program of public hearings in regional areas around the country.

I won't repeat what I said about the report on Monday.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank some of those people who I was not able to mention on Monday. Specifically those who hosted the committee during the site visits it conducted in South Australia in late 2019. Specifically, the committee needs to thank Mr Philip Mayes, founder and CEO of Mighty Kingdom; Mr Tony Clark, managing director of Rising Sun Pictures; Mr Michael Schuit, human resources manager at Costa Mushrooms; Mr Ian Lines, owner of Holla-Fresh herb farm; Father Dean Marin of St Paul's Catholic Church in Mount Gambier; and Antonia Vorenas of Metro Bakery and Cafe, also in Mount Gambier. I also wanted to acknowledge the member for Barker. He and his office played a vital role in organising these visits. Similarly the member for O'Connor gave us advice about people to see in Katanning and Kalgoorlie who we spoke to on teleconference. These site visits were immensely valuable in informing the committee of the work undertaken in regional areas to boost the skills base, fill important employment gaps and smooth the settlement process for migrants to regional areas.

I commend this report to the House. I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned.

Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (11:08): I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for debate.

Question agreed to.

Human Rights Committee

Report

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (11:08): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, I present the committee's report entitled Human rights scrutiny report: report 7 of 2020

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr PERRETT: by leave—I am pleased to table the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights's seventh scrutiny report of 2020. This report contains a technical examination of legislation with Australia's obligations under international human rights law.

(Quorum formed)

The report continues the committee's important work of scrutinising legislation developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the committee seeking information as to the human rights compatibility of such legislation; providing advice to the parliament; and concluding its examination of certain legislation after corresponding with relevant ministers. In particular, I note the committee's concluding remarks with respect to two Civil Aviation Safety Authority instruments, which exempt some pilots and other air traffic staff from certain regulatory requirements during the pandemic. The committee thanks the minister for explaining the human rights compatibility of these measures, and commends CASA for revising the statements of compatibility to reflect this, and for adopting the same course of action for two additional relevant instruments that it has identified. This is an excellent example of the way that the committee's dialogue model of engagement with ministers and departments can work in practice.

The committee has also continued to consider non-COVID related legislation. In this report, the committee seeks further information with respect to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment Bill 2020,
which seeks to replace ASIO's compulsory questioning framework and amend ASIO's powers with respect to the use of tracking devices. The committee considers that these powers engage a number of human rights, including the rights to liberty, privacy, fair trial, the rights of children and persons with disabilities, and the absolute prohibition against torture and degrading treatment. Consequently, the committee is seeking detailed information in relation to these concerns.

The committee is also seeking further information with respect to the Migration Amendment (Prohibiting Items in Immigration Detention Facilities) Bill 2020. The committee notes that prohibiting things in detention, such as mobile phones, and the search and seizure powers engages and may limit the rights to privacy, the rights of the child, humane treatment in detention and the prohibition against degrading treatment. Consequently, the committee is seeking further information in relation to the proposed measures.

Finally, the committee has concluded its consideration of the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (International Production Orders) Bill 2020. This bill seeks to establish a new framework for international production orders to provide Australian agencies access to overseas communications data for law enforcement and national security purposes, and to allow for reciprocal arrangements for certain countries. The committee considers that, as currently drafted, the bill may not be sufficiently circumscribed or contain sufficient safeguards to ensure the measures do not arbitrarily limit the right to privacy. Further, the bill does not appear to provide a person with access to an effective remedy where their right to privacy may have been breached, as they may never become aware that any interference took place. The committee has also expressed concern that the bill, as currently drafted, does not specifically prohibit mutual assistance where it may lead to the imposition of the death penalty, or to degrading treatment, in a foreign country. The committee has made a number of recommendations that consideration be given to amending the bill in a number of ways, in order to reduce the risk that information may be shared with a foreign country which could expose a person to the death penalty or to degrading treatment or punishment, and to improve the compatibility of the bill with the right to privacy.

I encourage all parliamentarians to carefully consider this report, and with these comments I commend the committee's Report 7 of 2020 to the chamber.

BILLS

Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (11:16): It is a great privilege to speak today on this bill, the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020. It is an issue that is very important to me and very important to my community. Ryan is home to the Gallipoli Barracks. Spanning around 200 hectares, the barracks is a major operational base and is home to three brigades. We also house the Enoggera Close Training Area adjacent to the barracks, some 450 hectares. This facility has a number of small arms ranges and is an important resource for individual training.

Ryan currently has almost 8,000 serving personnel. Two days ago in the House, I was able to speak on the incredible work our local serving defence personnel have been doing throughout this crisis, like the 20th Regiment of the Royal Australian Artillery quickly adapting their 3D-printing technology to print face shields for medical staff in Brisbane, just to name one example. Many of those who have served in these facilities, once they are no longer serving in our Defence Force, choose to stay on and continue to live, work and raise their families in the local community of Ryan. We have close to 2,500 veterans in Ryan and they continue to make incredibly valuable contributions to the electorate. It is a priority for me to make sure that they are supported and I am very proud to be part of a government that is absolutely committed to putting veterans and their families first.

This bill is about the next step in making sure our veterans have access to the right support at the right time—when they need it. I often speak about this government being a consultative one, and why that is so important to the success of our policymaking. I can think of no better example of that than the measures we are introducing today with this bill. My good friend the member for Herbert, who's in the chamber today, is a veteran himself and anyone here will tell you what a passionate advocate he is for veterans' mental health. Together with the Prime Minister and with many other members of the veteran community, he has been providing valuable input from his own experiences in order to find the best ways to help prevent veteran suicides, to support veterans' mental health and to save lives.
The first measure in this bill makes good on the commitment this government made in February this year to appoint a veteran family advocate. This new role will engage directly with families of veterans to improve the design of all veteran programs and services, including mental health supports and services. We recognise that this will be a continuously evolving area and that it is vital to get the ongoing input of veterans, their families and the defence community more broadly to shape this policy to get the best outcomes and make sure that our veterans' and their families' benefits are administered in the most effective and easy-to-access way. Once established, the Veteran Family Advocate will work directly with the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. Under the purview of this newly established role, it will work to ensure that every aspect of our veteran support system is focused on veterans' mental health and suicide prevention.

We, as a government, are listening to the real-life accounts, hardships and experiences of our veterans and their loved ones in order to respond to their needs in the best way possible. We have given our solemn commitment to take on their feedback and help them to be the architects of improvements to the system. We know that no government acting alone will be able to solve the complex and often unique problems those who have served our nation can face. We know that, once serving personnel leave active service, it can be difficult for them to gain civilian employment. We also recognise that this represents a vital part of the transition out of the forces, and that there needs to be additional support available when their transition, for whatever reason, does not go according to plan or they experience additional hardship or roadblocks.

Our government says loudly, as Mark Donaldson, VC, has said, that employing a veteran is good for your business, and the second measure in this piece of legislation is support for the employment program. Working with the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program, we'll be able to provide members of our ADF with the support they need to get a job, keep a job and grow in that job. Not only will this measure focus on equipping former ADF members with the necessary skills to seek a job, like interviewing and negotiating employment terms; it will also provide an avenue for post-employment assistance, like coaching with how to advance in a job and career advice. Again, we know that this is not a set-and-forget area. This must be and will be an ongoing and evolving focus, but it's an incredibly important focus to have.

I note my conversations at Gaythorne RSL and other local RSLs within the Ryan electorate about these young diggers who served our nation both in Afghanistan and Iraq and are now looking to exit the service and about the important work that those local RSLs are playing through their support programs as well in making sure those young diggers can transfer the skills they have learnt in the defence forces to an active career. In particular, I want to pay testament to John and other members of the Gaythorne RSL who are involved in Soldier On and the work they are doing particularly helping our younger diggers transfer out of the forces and into the workplace.

The final measure in this bill simply helps to improve the ease in which payments and benefits are administered by extending access to the quarterly energy supplement to people currently covered by other acts. This will ensure that all gold card holders are treated equitably, again showing that we will continue to seek further reform in this sector as we need to and as service personnel provide us with their feedback about how we can improve things.

I want to finish by saying to all the veterans in the Ryan community: please do not hesitate to reach out. We are here to support you, as are all the local RSLs in the Ryan community. We are here to help you access the many and varied avenues of support available. Please contact me or my office at any time. We know that the transition can be a daunting one. You have given so much of your family's time and your time to the service of our nation, and the least we can do is ensure that the transition to the workforce out of the defence forces is a successful one. To all those veterans living in the Ryan community, I simply say: thank you very much for your service.

(Quorum formed)

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (11:26): I'm pleased to speak on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020 and I move the amendment circulated in my name:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House criticises the Government for failing to:

(1) appropriately address the serious issue of veteran suicide, including its stubborn refusal to enact a full Royal Commission into veteran suicide and its insistence on instead establishing a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention; and

(2) introduce enabling legislation to establish a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention".

At the outset, Labor recognises the unique nature of military service, the sacrifice of current and former Australian Defence Force members and their families and the outstanding contribution they make to our nation. When a person enlists in the Australian Defence Force, they undertake a commitment to our country and, necessarily, may be placing their health and wellbeing on the line in service to our nation. In return, we are compelled to look after
them and their families both during and after their time in the defence force. This commitment is about more than just their physical health; it is about taking a holistic view of the member and their loved ones.

We have a duty of care for those who have served. This is especially so where that service has had a greater impact on them and their families now and into the future. When an individual serves in the ADF, their family serves with them. Military families make so many sacrifices. Many service men and women are deployed for months and months at a time, and often longer than the time they initially thought they may be deployed for. This separation would no doubt cause emotional stress for them, their partners and their children. When personnel are not on deployment, they are on regular re-postings to different bases around the country, meaning that they have to choose between uprooting their whole family and living apart from them for periods of time.

Our veterans and their families often have complex needs and require special support, and the Australian community has a rightful expectation that they will be looked after. Labor joins with the government in continuing to support our former, current and future defence personnel. To that end, this legislation is designed to improve the wellbeing of veterans and their families. The bill addresses three key elements: it implements the government's commitment to create a veteran family advocate, announced earlier this year; it provides changes to support the transition from Australian Defence Force service to civilian employment; and it ensures that all recipients of the Gold Card are treated equally in terms of their benefits.

I'll turn firstly to schedule 1 of the bill. In February, following strong calls from Labor, from veterans and their families and from sections of the media for a royal commission into veteran suicide, the government instead announced two new roles: the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention and the Veteran Family Advocate. I note the government says it intended to bring forward legislation to establish the national commissioner later this year, while this bill will establish the Veteran Family Advocate as a new commissioner to work as part of the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. These commissions are responsible for supporting the administration of veterans legislation and providing advice to the minister and government in relation to these important acts.

The Veteran Family Advocate will work with veterans and families to build our understanding of risk and protective factors relating to the wellbeing of veterans and their families, particularly during their transition from the Australian Defence Force. They will be responsible for directly engaging with the families of veterans to help shape policy; improve the design of all veteran programs and services, including mental health support and services.

In addition to performing the statutory function of representing the perspectives of veterans' families within the commissions, we understand that they will also consult with the families of veterans to hear their insights and experience about how to ease the burden facing veterans' families in supporting their loved ones; work with ex-service organisations, which represent families of veterans across Australia; and participate in key bodies, such as the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service and the Female Veterans and Veterans' Families Policy Forum.

I know the shadow minister for veterans' affairs consulted the Partners of Veterans Associations of Australia on this bill and they were broadly supportive, if a little unclear as to how exactly the new role would operate in practice. We understand the intention is that the Veteran Family Advocate will support the Department of Veterans' Affairs working to enhance the health and wellbeing of the veteran community. In doing so they will need to ensure that every part of the veterans support system is focused on veterans' mental health and suicide prevention and forge a partnership between these commissions and the families of veterans.

We trust they will have the necessary resources and independence to adequately represent the views of veterans' families to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and influence actual policymaking. Labor expects they will give a strong voice to veterans' families and promote better mental health outcomes when the Department of Veterans' Affairs is setting policy and making decisions. This is absolutely critical, because many veterans have complained about the lack of assistance once they transition out of the ADF. So the advocate will need to draw on advice from families to help shape veteran policy and reduce the risks as personnel leave the forces.

We know many Defence and veteran families have said that they are not always being heard when it comes to support and assistance. This is why Labor took a commitment to the last election to a strategy around better engagement by the Department of Veterans' Affairs with military and veteran families and identifying improvements to family support. Moreover, in June 2019 the Productivity Commission report on the veteran support system recommended better family engagement and support by relevant agencies. It's disappointing that the government has deferred its response to this important report until the delayed federal budget in October, but we do look forward to seeing that in due course.
Labor has serious concerns about the government's related proposal for the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. We would prefer, as many advocates have also called for, a royal commission into veterans' suicide, and I'll have more to say on that as we go. However, in substance, we welcomed the announcement of the Veteran Family Advocate at the time as a standalone measure. We just want to ensure that the advocate is appropriately resourced to be able to do their job. We all want to support veterans to the best of our ability. Labor hopes this new position will achieve better outcomes for our veterans and their families.

Schedule 2 of the bill facilitates flexibility in the way programs can be designed to assist the transition from the Australian Defence Force to the civilian workforce. This will allow for the establishment of new programs, such as the Support For Employment program, through the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2020. The regulations will contain the details of the employment, assistance or benefits, as well as who they will be provided to and in what circumstances they can be provided. Once established, through the regulations, this program will provide eligible veterans with both pre- and postemployment assistance. This includes career advice, coaching, assistance with skills translation, resume and interview preparation, and coaching to adapt to the structure and styles of communication in civilian employment. This will ensure similar employment support is available to recently transitioned veterans as is currently available to transitioning ADF members.

This funding and extra support is very welcome, although we would have liked to have seen it happen much sooner. Labor has been concerned that many of the government's veterans employment initiatives in the past have been tokenistic and appear to lack clear goals, targets and evaluations, which make it difficult to track whether they are actually delivering tangible outcomes. Some programs, like the Veterans Employment Commitment, which invites businesses to make a public commitment to employing veterans, and the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards, provide little real incentive for employers and rely largely on goodwill and PR. So it has been pleasing to see the government take a more needs based and individualised approach to transition more recently, with things like coaching and career planning, job placements and job search programs, service documentation, and early engagement and case management for younger ex-service men and women who may be at greater risk of mental health problems and even suicide. Labor understands the importance of veterans' employment, and the amendments in this bill are consistent with our calls for better support for veterans' transition from the ADF, so we support them.

Finally, schedule 3 of this bill rectifies an unintended oversight that has meant that the energy supplement has not been payable to some veteran gold card holders because they are covered under different legislation. This quarterly payment is made to a range of Department of Veterans' Affairs clients, including holders of the gold card, under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 and the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986. The measure will benefit approximately 91 eligible gold card holders under the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006, which covers service personnel involved in British nuclear tests in Australia and occupation forces in Japan, and Australian civilian, surgical and medical team members from the Vietnam War under the Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019. This measure will ensure that all gold card holders are treated consistently and equitably, and it will help more veterans meet the cost of their energy bills.

All up, these amendments should help to better meet the needs of veterans and their families, and Labor supports them. Our Defence Force personnel put their lives on hold in the service of our country. They take risks and make sacrifices, sometimes committing their lives and wellbeing for the good of the country. In return, we must do everything in our power to support them. As I've heard at meetings of local RSLs and from family and friends, and as I have discussed with many constituents both in my electorate and beyond, these risks and sacrifices, mental and physical, are very real. They are hard to manage. They take a huge toll on individuals and on their families. Veterans and their families need our full political and community support.

As I foreshadowed earlier, I will move a second reading amendment to this bill, which calls out the Morrison government's failings when it comes to the painful and ongoing scourge of veteran suicide. Firstly, whilst the measures in this bill to introduce a veteran family advocate and better employment and better transition support will go some way to addressing this issue, and are to be commended, the same can't be said for the way the government has responded to the issue of veteran mental health and suicide prevention more broadly. I remind the parliament that the context of for the Veteran Family Advocate was the government's announcement in February of a new National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. This followed widespread calls and overwhelming support for a royal commission into veteran suicide, and the Prime Minister's stubborn refusal to listen to these calls and commence one. Labor cautiously welcomed the announcement at the time as an important step forward, and because we did not want to let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Nonetheless, we were keen to see the detail, which has still not been forthcoming. Like many others, both in this place and outside it—like Julie-Ann Finney and the Bird family, whose sons tragically took their own lives after long battles with the
Department of Veterans' Affairs—we have become increasingly concerned that the national commissioner won't be better than a royal commission, as the government has claimed.

That's why in recent months Labor MPs and senators have been meeting with Ms Finney and other veterans' families and advocates to hear their views. It's become increasingly clear that the government has a major job to do in convincing them, and the public, that it is genuine in wanting to tackle this very important issue. A growing concern, shared by many veterans, is that this is simply a marketing exercise which won't accomplish what a royal commission would because it will have neither the resources nor the independence from government to ask the hard questions.

We know that only a royal commission will provide closure, healing and restorative justice for the defence and veterans' community. We have seen the benefits of this in many other areas, such as banking, mental health, child sexual abuse, aged care and disability services. What many parents of veterans who have taken their own lives have said is that a royal commission will allow them an opportunity to have their say and to be heard, while providing a powerful voice for their children. Importantly, it would provide an opportunity for us as a community to listen to them, and to assure them, in a public way, that we are doing everything possible to prevent these tragic deaths from happening in the future. Only a royal commission will do this. Otherwise, the national commissioner runs the very real risk of being little more than a new, glorified federal coroner. It might be that a royal commission could recommend that a standing, permanent capability be established to oversee ongoing reforms along the lines of what is envisaged with a national commissioner. But what is currently being proposed is putting the cart before the horse, and shows real lack of leadership and good faith with our veterans.

We know that the devil will be in the detail, so we need to see that detail as soon as possible. The time for procrastination by this government is well and truly over. All we've had so far is a media release and a two-page fact sheet. The government needs to release the enabling legislation and terms of reference as soon as possible, and to consult widely on it. It's very disappointing that, having committed to a national commissioner back in February, the government appears to be on a go-slow on a range of veterans' initiatives, including this one, and is showing a real lack of urgency on a very important issue. Not until we see the legislation will we be able to scrutinise it and see if this proposal will indeed have all the powers of a royal commission, and if the government is really genuine about tackling this terrible scourge. But, better still, while there is still time, the Prime Minister should do the right thing and establish a royal commission so that we can get to the bottom of veteran suicides and deliver real accountability and justice for our veterans and their families once and for all.

We have a special obligation to help our veterans. We train them, we ask them to put their lives at risk for us, and yet we find too many of them slipping through the cracks and not getting the support they and their families need after they leave the Australian Defence Force and, in some cases, tragically taking their own lives. As I've said, the government needs to do more to address veterans' mental health and suicide, which is precisely why I'm moving this second reading amendment and raising serious concerns about the government's current proposals in this area. Notwithstanding this, the bill currently before the House will go some way to addressing these issues and delivering better outcomes for our veterans and their families. So to that extent and for that reason Labor supports the bill.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to my local RSLs and the volunteers that run them and work with them to support the returned service men and women in my community, as I know similar volunteers do right across our country. I meet regularly with the leadership of my local RSLs and I not only see with those people the personal pain and suffering from their own service—indeed, deep PTSD issues that they have to confront—I hear and work with them on their own battles with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and how it affects them and their families and their ongoing lasting scars decades after they have left service.

But it's not just about them. Those volunteers through our RSLs and other veterans' services continue to put themselves out, in many cases retraumatising themselves, to help other veterans. I'm in a very honoured position to be able to hear the stories of not only those volunteers but the veterans they help too, and the stories I hear are deeply distressing. It's why it is so important that there are better avenues for the Department of Veterans' Affairs to properly understand what these veterans and their families are having to confront. This is not a load that should have to continually fall on volunteers in our community. Veterans' Affairs needs to get it right for them the first time, every time. This is a start. It's not enough. But I commend the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): Is the amendment seconded?

Ms Payne: I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original question was that this bill be now be read a second time. To this the member for Burt has moved that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. If it suits the House, I'll state the question in the form that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.
Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (11:47): I rise in support of the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020. I've never served in uniform. I haven't had the privilege of doing so. But I do represent a cohort of veterans in my community, in my electorate. The Sunshine Coast has reportedly around 15,000 veterans living in it. It's one of the largest veteran populations in the country, and quite naturally—why would you want to live anywhere other than the Sunshine Coast? It is God's paradise.

I join with the member for Burt in his view that we as a government, we as a parliament, need to do everything we can to ensure that we look after our veterans. There are not too many jobs where you are called upon to go to work and perhaps be injured in training or perhaps be killed or be asked to kill someone else. Military service is unique, and this government takes its responsibility to veterans very, very seriously. Just last year, the federal government paid some $11.5 billion for services for our veterans in looking after them. That's a substantial sum of money. But it's an investment that we make with pride because we believe in our veterans.

This bill goes a considerable way to looking after veterans. It establishes the Veteran Family Advocate in schedule 1. In schedule 2 it establishes an employment program to help veterans transition to employment once they discharge. It provides a quarterly energy supplement for those veterans who missed out in schedule 3—and I'll come to that later.

No conversation around veterans and their care would be complete without addressing the issues that some face in relation to mental health. I say 'some', because it is incumbent upon us in this place, in our own electorates, and in the broader community, to put things into perspective. Whilst I acknowledge and applaud the discussion around mental health for veterans and in the broader community, we need to be very, very careful that we do not establish a misnomer or a misconception that, if you have served in the ADF, when you discharge you're broken. Nothing could be further from the truth.

On the one hand, we talk about the importance of acknowledging mental health issues. But then, on the other hand, we talk about the importance of giving every opportunity for ADF veterans to seek meaningful employment. Is it any wonder that not enough businesses are employing veterans? We talk so much about mental health and veterans that I fear that we're setting up a misconception in the broader public that, if you are a veteran, you're broken. I am concerned that employers may be fearful about the person they may be employing and the problems that might come with that. Veterans bring so many skills, values and attributes to their task, whatever that task might be. They bring the values of commitment, of trust, of honour, of getting the job done and of not being clock-watchers. They're task-orientated.

For any employer out there, and for my colleagues in here, I implore you to, next time you have a job vacancy, specifically search out and try and employ a veteran. You will not be disappointed. That goes for my colleagues in this place. This may sound surprising to some who may be listening but there are many similarities between service in the military and service in politics. In my short time of four years in this place, I've employed around four or five veterans, and I have found them to be exceptional employees. They bring a great amount of vision, wisdom and dedication to the role that they fulfill in my office. So I want to say to members of parliament: don't encourage members of the business community to employ a veteran if you aren't doing it yourself. Lead by example and employ a veteran. The vast majority of veterans are not broken men and women. The vast majority of veterans will make outstanding employees. I want to send that challenge out to all employers, including members of the parliament today.

That said, I want to acknowledge for his service the member for Herbert, who's just entered the chamber. I want to acknowledge the member for Canning and the members for Stirling, Braddon and Solomon. This is not a partisan thing. It includes members opposite, including the retired member for Eden-Monaro, who was an outstanding member of this House and an outstanding member of the ADF. This is not a party politics thing. Members of the ADF join the ALP or the Liberal Party or National Party, and I want to acknowledge their service to this place and their country.

We have to acknowledge that, unfortunately, we do damage some of our men and women. We damage them—not all of them, but some of them—because of the physical demands we make of them. But it's not just the physical demands we make of them; it's also the mental scars that some of them incur as a result of their service. A constituent of mine by the name of Peter Kennedy, at a function I held recently, said this about veterans: 'We had a few scratches. Some of us are a little bit bent out of shape. But if you work with us and help us back into shape, you're going to get a great product for a long time.'

The sad reality is that when members of the ADF, particularly men, are currently serving, they have a 48 per cent lower chance of dying by suicide than the general population. I'll say that again: a recent study found that ADF personnel—and this study, unfortunately or fortunately depending on which way you look at it, was...
restrained to men because at that time there weren't any women who had taken their own lives—had a 48 per cent lower chance of taking their life whilst they were serving in the ADF. But once they're discharged, that 48 per cent lower chance jumps to an 18 per cent higher chance. Why is that? Why is it that we see that jump? I'm not a psychologist, but in my view many men, particularly young men, who have served in the ADF, may have longed for nothing other than to be an infantry soldier, or to serve in the RAAF or the Royal Australian Navy. That may have been their life's ambition before, for one reason or another, whether it be of their own volition, or because they may have been injured, or perhaps it may even be a disciplinary matter, men who discharge in their mid-20s or lower are significantly at risk of self-harm. Why is that? Whilst they are in the ADF, they have a sense of mission and a sense of purpose. They belong to a tribe that will back them to the hilt. Their mates will die for them. But, when they leave and are discharged from the ADF, all of a sudden they are on their own and they lose that sense of mission, they lose that sense of purpose and they lose that tribe—or at least they may feel like they lose that tribe—and many young men in particular have a great deal of difficulty dealing with that.

The vast majority of them will recover and will go on to lead very full and meaningful lives. But some will struggle. That's where this bill, with its introduction of the Veteran Family Advocate, will assist, because this is a statutory function. The Veteran Family Advocate will consult with families. Families play the most significant role in the recuperation and recovery of our young veterans. They are those closest to the veteran and they are the ones who can do the most beneficial work with them. The Veteran Family Advocate will work with ex-service organisations. The Veteran Family Advocate will participate in key bodies such as the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service and the Female Veterans and Veteran's Families Forum.

But, in my view, perhaps the most important thing that will come out of this bill in their transition to civilian employment is the Support for Employment program for ADF personnel. Just think about it: one minute they might be flying, driving or sailing multimillion- or multibillion-dollar equipment. This government, this country, entrusts to them such a great responsibility: to serve their nation but to do that with significant assets. And yet, when they leave, some can't get a job. How demoralising would that be for those men and women, particularly those who are young? This measure in schedule 2 will complement the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program. It'll provide eligible former ADF personnel with both pre- and postemployment assistance. This is so important.

We talk in this place about the best form of welfare being a job. I want to encourage all employers, including those in this building, to walk the talk and give a job to a veteran.

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (12:02): I'm glad to rise today to support the wellbeing of local veterans and their families across the New South Wales South Coast. We have a strong defence presence in my electorate of Gilmore, so it is no surprise that veterans and their families are an important part of our community. We need to make sure we are doing absolutely everything we can to help and support local veterans, and that is why I am supporting the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020 today.

During the 2019 election, Labor promised a veteran family engagement and support strategy. We recognised the critical importance of urgently addressing the rates of veteran suicide in our community and making sure that those who leave our defence forces get the help and support they deserve. Defence families are the unsung heroes of the Australian Defence Force. Families of serving and veteran military personnel face a unique set of challenges; there is no doubt about that. These can be even more challenging as they leave the Defence Force and try to reintegrate back into civilian life. We need to make sure that those who support our serving and veteran ADF members are receiving the help they need.

I am pleased that this bill will create a commissioner to represent the perspectives of families of veterans on the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. The Veteran Family Advocate will give a voice to veterans' families and highlight the important role they play in veteran and family health and wellbeing. It will make sure families inform veteran policy and the administration of veterans' entitlements. The Veteran Family Advocate will work with veterans' families to build our understanding of risk and protective factors as veterans transition from the Defence Force. Veteran suicide is a scourge among our community and it requires urgent and immediate attention. It is absolutely critical that every part of the veteran support system is focused on veterans' mental health and suicide prevention, and I hope that the advocate provides the strong voice veterans' families need.

There are a number of organisations on the New South Wales South Coast that are working hard to support local veterans and their families. One of the best things about our beautiful coast is, no doubt, the ocean. We have hundreds of beaches in my electorate, so I guess it should be no surprise that some clever-thinking locals have put surfing and therapy together to improve the mental health and wellbeing of local veterans. The Australia-first initiative Defence Surf Therapy is thanks to local Gerroa veteran Glenn Kolomeitz and former professional surfer...
and owner of the Gerringong Surf School, Rusty Moran. The program was launched last year to show that non-pharmacological treatments can be effective at reducing stress and managing mental health issues like post-traumatic stress disorder. It is innovative programs like this that we need to be focussing on as we look for new ways to manage a long recognised problem. That is why I was absolutely thrilled to see this program receive $280,000 in federal funding under the Supporting Younger Veterans grants program. The Nowra based Keith Payne VC Veterans Benefit Group will manage the governance of a 12-month pilot for this program, and it is hard to imagine a better place to run a surfing program like this than the beautiful Seven Mile Beach at Gerroa. Over 10 weeks, up to 70 veterans will be taught how to surf by Rusty and his team.

But, of course, the program is about so much more than surfing. Veterans can meet and connect with each other. They will learn how to practice mindfulness and they will be supported in their journey back into civilian life. The program is based on a similar one from the United States and will also see psychology services offered, with follow-up six and 12 months later. The overall benefits of a program like this are far greater than the two-hour surf lesson. By finding different ways of dealing with the mental health concerns of our veterans, we help them to re-engage in our community. As Rusty Moran said:

If we can help veterans learn practices to clear their mind of negative thoughts, they can be more present off the board then hopefully they can incorporate it into their civilian life routine.

As with mental health responses in the broader community, we need to find ways of helping and supporting people without just turning to medication. We know that can have all kinds of wider repercussions. This is the type of program that can be developed if we stop talking at veterans and their families and start listening to their ideas. It is wonderful to see the broader veteran community getting behind this fantastic initiative. Thank you to Rusty Moran and Glenn Kolomeitz as well as to Rick Meehan and Fred Campbell from Keith Payne VC Veterans Benefit Group for your work putting this program together.

Rick and Fred are also wonderful advocates of our local veteran community. They are a passionate pair who have spent years working to improve veterans' lives. They are the driving forces behind the successful Shoalhaven Digger Day, another great day of celebration and connection for our local veterans. It's a traditional rugby match with more than a little friendly competition between long-time rivals Shoalhaven and Kiama. It's just one of a host of fantastic local celebrations and, as Rick says, 'A time to reflect on what our veterans have done for our country in all past wars and conflicts.' They also run the Operation Walk to Talk group on Friday mornings in Harry Sawkins Park in Nowra, another great initiative aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of local veterans.

Our RSL sub-branches play an important role in supporting our veteran community. Run by passionate volunteers, they are making a real difference in the lives of local veterans. For example, take the Sussex Inlet RSL Club sub-branch. Volunteers from the sub-branch are regularly visiting veterans in hospitals and nursing homes, providing company and mateship to those who are often in very lonely situations. I was proud to support these volunteers recently by providing $4,000 to the Sussex Inlet RSL Club sub-branch for training and fuel reimbursements under the volunteer grants program. A few months ago, I also had the pleasure of dropping into the Moruya RSL sub-branch meeting at the lovely RSL memorial hall. All of the local members are always welcoming, and I was happy to have the opportunity to check in with them. I hope to be back there soon.

I was also thrilled when the Eurobodalla Vietnam veterans received $5,332 under Building Excellence in Support and Training grants. This will help provide compensation and welfare assistance to the defence and veteran community on the far South Coast—more wonderful news for local veterans. I know it will make a real difference to local communities and families. Last year I joined with the Eurobodalla Vietnam veterans to commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day. The service was a fitting tribute to those brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I was proud to join with them to honour people for their service.

It would be remiss of me to talk about the importance of ADF families without mentioning the amazing Shoalhaven Defence Families Association. The New South Wales South Coast is of course home to HMAS Albatross and HMAS Creswell, two vital Australian Navy assets, but they are also vital assets to the Shoalhaven community. The Shoalhaven Defence Families Association was created to support the families of our local serving personnel—those unsung heroes I spoke about earlier. Their aim is to bring fun, friendship and support to defence and civilian families in the Shoalhaven and surrounding areas. This includes activities like playgroups, craft groups, courses and training as well as the community centre Kookaburra Retreat. The Kookaburra Retreat has a strong focus on supporting families that are facing the particular challenges that come with the defence way of life. It gives families of serving personnel a social outlet and lets them build connections with people who understand exactly what they are going through. The value of that cannot be overstated. Thank you to all the members of the Shoalhaven Defence Families Association for everything you do to support our defence families.
Schedule 2 of the bill also helps to facilitate flexibility in the way programs can be designed to assist the transition from the ADF to the civilian workforce. Eligible veterans will be given both pre and post employment assistance, including career advice, coaching, assistance with skill translation, resume and interview preparation and coaching to adapt to the structure and style of communication in civilian employment. We need to make sure that there is enough support for our recently transitioned Defence Force members so that they can gain and keep meaningful employment. We know that this, in itself, makes a distinguishable difference to mental health and overall wellbeing outcomes both in and out of the defence industry. I am pleased to support these improvements to workplace support for our veterans.

We need to do more to support our veterans as they transition into civilian life. It is a challenging and confusing time and too many people have told me they just didn't know where to go. That is why, before the last election, Labor committed to seven veteran wellbeing centres across the country, including one in Nowra. These centres will enable services to be delivered on the ground. They'll be a one-stop shop providing support for local veterans. This is something our veteran community, including the South Coast Veterans Motorcycle Club, lobbied hard for.

RSL New South Wales has been selected as the local partner and delivery agency for the $5 million centre, with former Navy commodore and president of the RSL Central Southern District Council, Lee Corder AM, overseeing the steering committee. However, we are waiting for crucial details on funding and implementation approaches to be announced. We still don't know, as yet, where the site will be, but it was said that it would be completed in 2020. Sadly, but perhaps not surprisingly, planning on other centres around the country is far more advanced than the Nowra centre. Our country areas are missing out again. The government need to get on with it. Local veterans have been waiting for this too long already. They deserve better.

The last change in this bill, to schedule 3, will mean all gold card holders will now be able to access the energy supplement to help them with their energy costs, a move I know will be welcomed by those caught up in an unintended omission from the current legislation. I will always support efforts to make sure our veterans are treated fairly and consistently, and I am glad to see this change being made today.

I have long been advocating for and supporting reform that improves the lives of our local veterans. When I was a candidate during 2018, I held a veterans forum, along with the member for Kingston, the then shadow minister for defence personnel and veterans' affairs, to hear firsthand from our veterans about what policy changes were needed to better support our veteran family. At that forum, we discussed support for veterans transitioning to a civilian life, through training and workplace support. We also discussed the need to improve support for our wonderful ADF families. I have already mentioned Labor's Family Engagement and Support Strategy, but it was a critically important commitment to so many in our community.

This bill seeks to address these issues, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk about how we can further support local defence and veterans' families, but these ideas need to come direct from veterans themselves. I would like to take the opportunity to make special mention of my former colleague, Mike Kelly. A veteran himself, Mike was a true advocate for the Eden-Monaro veteran community. He was a major contributor to Labor's policy agenda on veterans' issues in the lead-up to the last election. Mike understood the challenges facing our veterans in gaining employment outside of the Defence Force and in managing their mental health. I was proud to stand with Mike in advocating for improvements like those included in this bill today. I know he will continue to play an important role in the local community, even after his retirement from this place. I wish him all the best.

I will keep listening to our veterans and advocating for the policy improvements they need. These ideas must always come from the ground up. I hope that this bill will provide that strong voice for veterans' families, to promote better mental health outcomes as part of the regular policy and decision-making process. I have heard from too many veterans about the lack of support provided as they left the Defence Force, and from too many families who have told me that they felt they were going it alone. I hope this bill will help to achieve better outcomes for veterans and their families. I would like to thank each and every member of our veteran community for their efforts to serve and protect our country. Thank you to all our unsung defence heroes, and the families and friends of our Australian defence forces, who are there every day, dealing with the unique challenges they face. And thank you to everyone in our broader community for working so hard to protect and support our defence family. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (12:18): I'd like to start by acknowledging all the men and women around the nation who have worn the uniform or continue to wear the uniform in service to this nation, and I acknowledge their families, who are the backbone of the defence community. I would like to acknowledge every member in this House who has served their nation in the ADF—the member for Canning, the member for Solomon, the member for Stirling, the member for Braddon and the member for Leichhardt and, of course, the senators in the other place who have served this nation and continue to serve this nation.
Improving the wellbeing of veterans and their families should not just be words. It should be enshrined in all of us here, every day, to better support the people that have fought for our freedoms, our democracy and our way of life—the people that we put in harm's way to ensure that we can sleep safely and soundly at night. It's important that we acknowledge not just our ADF men and women but also their families. Their families are often forgotten about or left behind, not included in discussions and not included in policy development. I think it's such a step forward for everyone in this place to support the Veteran Family Advocate, because the Veteran Family Advocate is the person who links into the families—to the wives, to the husbands, to the spouses and to the children—to better inform government and ex-service organisations on policy, on the way we should go forward and on the way that best supports the family. That's because we know what can happen with family breakdown.

Our Defence men and women veterans have a higher-than-average rate of suicide—higher than for the general public. That's not good enough. We who sit in this place should never accept that. We who sit in this place, who pass laws, who speak on bills and who thank people for their service, must use more than words. We must go into action and not use words for political point-scoring. There is always healthy debate about what we should and shouldn't be doing in the veterans' community. That's debate that I would encourage. But it should be debate where we all want to go in the same direction, not just for point-scoring.

The Veteran Family Advocate will complement the national commissioner, which is a rolling commission into veteran suicides. The family advocate will set out, influence and develop policy within the Department of Veteran's Affairs. The advocate will also link in with ex-service organisations around the country and their members of parliament at the state and federal levels. We know that having this family advocate, as well as the families' committees that have been set up through the Department of Veteran's Affairs, is in the best interests of the nation and definitely in the best interests of family members, still-serving family members or former-serving family members.

We know that meaningful engagement and meaningful employment that are things that are encouraged within the veterans' space. We know that, through illness or injury, not everyone can work once they've left the ADF. But it is something to have that engagement and that meaning in your life, where you wake up in the morning with something to do or somewhere to be employed. To balance injury, illness, engagement and employment is a challenge, but this family advocate will help with that balance. I could have been a statistic easily—easily. Friends of mine are statistics—friends of mine that we discuss in here. This is something that we must do together. We have to do it together.

I know that the former Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, agrees. I know he does. And I know that everyone on the other side and on the crossbench agree. But sometimes—and I'm going to use a word that I'm allowed to use—it does make me somewhat upset when we see the knives come out on something so important. I know that it doesn't have to happen and I know that sometimes it happens unintentionally, but when it happens it doesn't affect us in here; it affects the families, the spouses, the wives, the husbands, the kids, the still-serving and the former-serving people. They see us in here using them as a political football. We mustn't do that; we must work together. Debate, yes, but work together for the betterment of the veteran community and their families.

I'd like to see our veterans included with ex-service organisations. And, where there isn't an ex-service organisation, how can we find one there? How can we link people in, whether in person, or via social media or other platforms? It's that linkage, that connection, that we need. And for families, it's the same thing: having that connection with other families. It's talking to them and finding out what works in their house—what works at home and what works when they've been deployed, or are deployed or were deployed? How are the kids tracking? These are things that we need to discuss and these are things which we need to foster and encourage.

Whilst this is a bill that we're talking about in parliament, the role of government is to create a healthy environment in which the communities that we speak on, the veteran community and their families, can grow and prosper—to deliver for them. It should be veteran-led, families-led, not government-led. Having veteran employment awards that recognise industry and different organisations that employ veterans and their families is a great step in the right direction, because, whilst not every veteran comes out of the military well, we're not all broken. Some of us are, and that's okay. We still can have employment and engagement, and so can our families. We need to foster the non-broken narrative that plagues Australia when we talk about veterans, because of the high number of suicides, because of the high number of people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness or can be mentally unwell—just like everyone else. Everyone else goes through the same dramas, just in a different and unique way. I say to employers, to industry and to political parties: having veterans involved will only benefit you.

Having the support wrapperound that a veteran family advocate will provide will be essential. We'll be able to amend, to change, to refocus what we discuss. We do not need to be telling people what they want. We must be asking, 'What do you need?' It should be led by the veterans and veterans' families, not led by government. I know
that, in the case of the families and other people who have been bereaved by suicide, it hurts every person here, every day, having to talk about how we 'should' be working together or how we 'should' do this or how this 'could' work. The time for talk is over. The time for action needs to be now, because suicide, mental illness and suicide prevention are the responsibility of everyone who sits in this place. We need to be a part of creating, developing and working with the families to be a part of solutions—to be solutions-oriented, not waiting for something terrible to happen. Having more than 400 suicides in less than a 20-year period is simply not good enough. It should not be accepted by any member of parliament. The community does not accept it; therefore, we should be doing more to combat it.

I want to finish by saying that a veteran family advocate is long overdue. A veteran family advocate should have no political ties. It should be independent and sit in the middle, as I'm sure it will, and work with every person and with ex-service organisations—a big team, a great team, that goes out and speaks with families, children, members, ex-service organisations, people in this place, everyone. Families, veterans and still-serving members of the ADF should never be used for point-scoring or for adversarial action. They should be used to create and promote better policy and a better agenda so that we can best support them.

Dr HAINES (Indi) (12:28): I rise today to speak on this important bill, the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020, which aims to enhance the wellbeing of veterans and their families. You don't have to look far in Indi to find strong communities of veterans and their families, from lively returned-services clubs in Mansfield, Myrtleford, Alexandra and Yea, to name just a few, to veteran welfare and support centres, community fishing groups and even one of the largest and most-diversified military museums in Australia, the Army Museum Bandiana. Veterans are a proud, proud part of our community.

The Bandiana Military Area, which houses the Army Logistics Training Centre and Gaza Ridge Barracks, also spans some 670 hectares just outside of Wodonga. Colonel Matt Patching is the commandant of the Army logistics training centre there. Indi is full of active service personnel and members of the broader community committed to supporting and advocating for our veteran communities. Indeed, it was the Latchford Barracks in Wodonga that opened its doors last summer during the 'black summer' bushfires, providing a safe haven for families with nowhere to go. On 6 January, in the middle of our darkest days, 160 people forced to evacuate their homes were welcomed at the Latchford Barracks.

The reforms in this bill make it clear that the nation sees our veterans and their families and recognises their immense contributions and unique challenges. It says, 'We see you and we support you.' The creation of a veteran family advocate position on the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission recognises an often hidden segment of our veteran communities. Families of veterans see them in their quiet moments and understand their particular aspirations and their very real challenges. Veteran family members have their own stories to tell.

If you will indulge me, Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to draw on a few firsthand examples from my electorate that illustrate the communities that these reforms support on the ground. Late last year, I heard from the tireless team of volunteers led by Mr Wayne Taylor at the Hume Veterans' Information Centre based in Wodonga. This centre has been operational for over 20 years and has assisted 7,500 veterans, war widows and widowers, other veteran dependants and carers during that time and has supported them in an array of needs. Many mental health issues, of course, as illustrated and talked about in the House today, are largely and greatly affected by PTSD, and we know our return service men and women suffer from this tremendously. From January to October 2019 alone, the compensation advocates and welfare team at the centre dedicated 1,600 volunteer hours and 13,000 kilometres on the road assisting veteran communities. That's the equivalent of three trips on the road from Sydney to Perth. That's a lot of driving! The volunteers help support veterans prepare documents for the Department of Veterans' Affairs and act as knowledgeable conduits for applications as their paperwork is assessed. These volunteers also provide invaluable advocacy support for spouses, families, and widows and widowers of veterans, as well as services ranging from hospital and aged-care visits to bereavement support, assistance with legal affairs and even home maintenance and gardening. These volunteers and the unwavering spirit of veteran communities in Indi hearten me. I was delighted to learn last year that the Hume Veterans' Information Centre had received a $5 million grant to expand their contributions and establish a new veterans wellness centre in Wodonga, which will ensure these services for veterans and their families continue and that they do so in a modern state-of-the-art building.

The expansion of financial assistance to former ADF members to aid their transition to civilian work is another welcomed measure in this bill. These new measures, which include support with resume writing, job interview skills and navigating issues in the civilian workplace, which can be worlds apart from defence workplaces, will help veterans of working age to find fulfilling new roles. Former ADF members have incredible skill sets from
leadership, strategic planning and problem solving to advanced engineering, emergency management and medical qualifications. It's important that we build strong bridges for former ADF members so that they can utilise these skills in civilian life and employment, if they wish to, and bring such skills and expertise to our community. This bill is another part of that bridge to civilian life.

Supporting defence personnel also means supporting their spouses and families. Defence families often move around the country to new locations where they have no roots, no supports, and no broader family members. Supporting their spouses to find meaningful employment is so important to making defence a viable career path for families, and that's why I'm encouraging the government to consider a proposal developed by Business Wodonga for two schemes to enable defence spouses to find employment opportunities in Wodonga. The first is a six-week program to accelerate social and professional networks for defence spouses to help them start businesses, find employment, upskill or tap into local networks. The second is an employment exchange program where newcomers to Albury-Wodonga could be skills matched to prospective employers even before arriving in town. Supporting worthy programs like this is crucial to making defence a viable career pathway. I implore the government to consider such programs, especially in these difficult times where people are seeking work.

While it's important we provide assistance to former ADF members in their transition to civilian life and employment, it's also really important that we ensure ADF members receive the appropriate superannuation benefits and other entitlements accrued during their service as they enter into civilian life. I note, for example, that veteran communities in my electorate welcomed the defence bill this parliament passed in May, which enables former ADF members to continue to make contributions to their ADF super accounts and extends access to the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme for up to five years.

There are tireless advocates for these types of reforms. I note in particular the work of former Lieutenant Colonel Mr Jim Hislop OAM, who was recently awarded a Queen's birthday honour for his service to veterans' communities, and his colleague Mr Herb Ellerbock, former warrant officer class 1. These gentlemen have briefed me about the concerns they and veterans they represent have had with the administration of the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme. As an independent, it is my privilege to represent the interests of everyone in my electorate. To this end, I support their advocacy in this place. It's so important to ensure veterans transition well into civilian life and that their service and entitlements are truly honoured. There are countless other examples of service and altruism I could have given today from the veteran community in my electorate, but I won't go into all of those.

I want to say finally that this is a good bill. It keeps those communities of our veterans front of mind. I'm very pleased to support it. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (12:37): There are many things that have given me angst, including the DVA and the situation with our returned servicemen. I'm just a little bit before Vietnam by a few months. I joined the militia because—I can't remember—we were either at war with Indonesia or we were going to war with Indonesia. They were scary times. I served some eight years in the militia. My father before me had joined the militia before the Second World War, again, I think with a view that war was going to come. I can't say that in my case I was being very patriotic. I felt if I got in early, I'd be giving the orders instead of taking them, so I was so probably anything but patriotic!

In the Second World War Uncle Dick, Uncle Bert, Uncle Allan, Uncle George—I think eight of my uncles, or my parent's cousins which we called uncles—were fighting in the war. I knew all of them when they came home. There were 62 that had fought in the war in Cloncurry. I cannot remember a single person that came back with a problem—not one! Did we have any alcoholics? No. Did we have any people with mental problems? No. Did we have any suicides? No. So what's going on now?

There have been two very excellent documentaries on this issue—and I can't remember what channels they were on—that concentrated on the Department of Veterans' Affairs. With all departments there are good people, but there's something seriously wrong. A government department administering this is just totally wrong. In every case that I have had the bloke is going along. He runs into a few problems. He's not at ease. He goes along and sees the DVA and then he falls right off the edge. That was the two documentaries. The minute they came in contact with the government department—and I'm not going to hazard a guess but I do know that they believed that the DVA was on their side and there to help them and they got the exact opposite reaction from the people they were dealing with.

I better not mention his name without his permission but a captain in the Army was having a fight with a major on the aeroplane and I was between them. The major said: 'There's no problem. It's all in their minds. They're just softies.' The bloke pulled out the photograph of his platoon, which he obviously carries with him wherever he goes. If my memory serves me correctly, there were five that had committed suicide, four who had been killed in
accidents which were tantamount to suicide, and five who were under psychiatric care. Is that the average? It may well be the average.

If you've got public servants here in Canberra running this outfit, there is something terribly wrong. I represent a fortress city, Townsville. I represent the northern beaches areas of Townsville and Cairns, where most of the soldiers retire to, so I have a disproportionate number of retirees in the Kennedy electorate. There are a few people who say they have had a good experience with the DVA, but if I go into every single problem that arose when they went near the DVA—there's not a single person having any power up in North Queensland where all the soldiers are. There are about 2,000 naval personnel and related families in Cairns. That's quite apart from the 6,000 or 7,000 in Townsville in the Army, yet there is not a single representative that they have on a commission that controls this body, and the government is proposing that we have a commissioner! We know where he will be coming from. The good old boys, the ranking brass, will have a look at the generals or the colonels. But forget about the ordinary soldiers. They won't be getting a look in. Forget about the warrant officers, the sergeants and the lesser ranks; they won't be getting a look in.

So long as this Public Service mentality prevails in an area that should be supersensitive to people—if you want government of the people, by the people, for the people, then the first thing you should be doing is setting up a commission that reflects government of the people, by the people and for the people. You have it run by a bunch of public servants who probably didn't fire a rifle in their entire lives let alone a rifle in combat, so we shouldn't really be surprised what the outcomes are. I haven't done the research that I probably should have done on this but I don't doubt that the report is correct, but the fact is that many more people have died with post-traumatic stress syndrome than died in warfare in the Vietnam War or in subsequent wars that we've been involved in. We're losing more people because of their treatment after the war than we lost actually in the wars.

When the boys came home from the First World War—Jack McEwen, I sit under his picture. Like so many of us he never actually went over. I thank the good Lord, I didn't get sent over. We were in a 24-hour call-up. We were F1 battalion, ready for combat, but it blew over—Indonesia—before we went over there. So I was lucky. Jack McEwen volunteered in the First World War. It blew over before he went over there. But as a returned serviceman he was entitled to a block of land, which he turned into a dairy farm, which he turned into five dairy farms, and he became one of the biggest dairy farmers in Victoria and the great leader of the dairy industry throughout Australia.

He got his chance and his start in life as a result of the government looking after him after the war. As a soldier, he was looked after.

After the Second World War, you again got free university education if you wanted it, free trade training if you wanted it, and, again, soldier settler blocks were made available. The average size of a station property in North Queensland is probably 100,000 hectares. I myself owned 100,000 hectares, and mine was the smallest station in the area where I was. Now, if you put a few dams and weirs in, you could have your soldier settler schemes for these people. But they get nothing. They come home now and they get absolutely nothing. I've asked thousands of people—well, hundreds anyway—this: 'What's the problem?' And they say, 'Well, we're in a family. We're in a team. We had clear-cut objectives. Our life was mapped out for us, and suddenly we're just wandering, lost souls. No direction, no jobs, no family, no team. Just ships cast adrift.'

I think that, to start, we should set up a commission, and that commission should not represent the 20 or 30 people who have served as colonels, generals, brigadiers or whatever. In saying that, one of the finest Australians I've ever met in my life, and one of the most outstanding soldiers this country has ever produced, is the famous brigadier of the 'mad galahs', as they call themselves. I'm not necessarily knocking them; there are exceptions to the rule. What I'm saying is: if you in this place seriously believe in government of the people, by the people, for the people, then, for every colonel, you have thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen, and that is where that commission should come from. I'm not saying there shouldn't be some from the higher ranks, but the vast, overwhelming bulk should represent the vast, overwhelming bulk of the Army, and that would be a good starting point to turn this around.

I want to pay tribute to people like Tim White, an ex-captain in the Army—and he's not Robinson Crusoe; there are many others like him. He's taken it upon himself to look after his boys after they get out. And they've taken it upon themselves to look after First Australians. His first mission was at Wujal Wujal. There were 23 young men who did the bushcraft course there and, of the 23, I think six became regular soldiers and 12 joined the militia, which was an excellent outcome. But, knowing Tim well, I think that he's doing this more for his soldiers and for the terrible suffering of his own platoon, whose horrific figures I have quoted here. I hope I've quoted them accurately; I couldn't get hold of him before I got up to speak. There'd be 1,000 Tim Whites out there, screaming
out for something to be done. But I don't want to say what should be done. I don't even want to analyse the problem, because, even though I have spoken to hundreds of them, I'm not 100 per cent sure. But this I know: they'll be going along alright; they go to see the DVA and then they walk straight over the edge—and, in many cases, quite literally over the edge.

I was in a hotel on the last night that I spent campaigning in the last state election, and there were five blokes there who had retired from the service. One was a senior officer, and he was not in a good state. There were two others; one of them very seriously in trouble. I again pay very great tribute to the president of the RSL and of people like myself who were in the militia for Far North Queensland. I went over to him and said, 'Are you aware of what's going on?' He said, 'I'm watching everyone of them on a daily basis.' We have good and saintly people who go out of their way to look after these soldiers, but we are falling well short of where we should be.

I listened to the address by the professor of agriculture—the dean of the faculty at the biggest agriculture university in Australia, the University of Queensland. In his address he said that there are three great shames of this nation: the way we treated the First Australians; the way we treated the people who came home from Vietnam—returned servicemen—in general; and the way we treated the dairy farmers of Australia. I would have added to that our participation in the Boer War, where 28,000 women and children were starved to death as policy by the British Army and in which we participated; and the great shame that we would only allow 15,000 Jewish people in here before the Second World War. Six million of them couldn't get any country on earth to take them, so they perished in the gas chambers of Adolf Hitler. Sadly, we must share some of the horrific blame here. We could have taken half a million of those people and not even noticed they were here in Australia.

One looks back on these mistakes, but here is one that we can address now. Jacqui Lambie has served notice, and I am one of her lieutenants in this battle. Jacqui has promised me that she'll visit us, in and out of Townsville, on a regular basis, and we're going to start to shake things up. So either go along peacefully or it's going to be done hard, and that's not going to be very pleasant for anyone.

Mr DICK (Oxley) (12:51): I rise to speak on this important bill, the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and their Families) Bill 2020, today and to speak about the second reading amendment moved by the shadow minister.

I thank the member for Kennedy for his remarks. I am in awe of his commitment to veterans across our state and our country, and I thank him for his very informed remarks. As the son of a World War II veteran, I can echo what he said in the debate. When my father came back from war there wasn't a lot of support for veterans. Veterans were either deemed to have shell shock on their service record or they were given housing opportunities, with no real support.

In preparation for today's debate, and through the National Archives, this week I received my father's Royal Australian Naval Reserve Record of Mobilised Service. On 27 October 1941, official No. B3388, Dick, Allan Baxter, of Brisbane signed up to the Royal Australian Navy. On that record it listed his dates of service, on a two-page, yellow, torn document that clearly is still in existence. He was discharged on 1 April 1946, and the statement of service was forwarded to the ex-servicemen on 25 May 1946.

The reason I've read that into the record is that it was really the clear demonstration that when people left the Navy or the services, a lot of the time they were left to fend for themselves. Growing up, and later in life—it was only really when I was a teenager—that my father would talk about the war. He never attended RSL meetings and never attended Anzac Days. He was a very proud veteran and a very proud patriot, but he never acknowledged, or didn't want to talk about, the war. I think our country has come so far, when every single member of this parliament now works closely with their veterans and RSLs. This wasn't always the case. Everyone has a different story about their service in the ADF. I myself haven't served, but I'm proud to work alongside so many RSL sub-branches in the Oxley electorate to not only learn from but understand their experiences. I talk about their sacrifice. I talk about the tremendous effort they've given to our country. I want to speak on this bill today to acknowledge the fact of not just how far we have come with our veterans in this country but how far we still have to go.

I know the good work of RSL sub-branches across Australia, including those in the south-west of Brisbane and the suburbs of Ipswich that I proudly represent in this parliament: the Centenary Suburbs Sub Branch, the Darra & District Sub Branch, the Forest Lake Sub Branch, the Goodna Sub Branch, the Redbank Sub Branch and the Redbank Plains Sub Branch. I commend each and every one of the sub-branches for its hard work. The presidents and committee members of all of them should be applauded for their advocacy for veterans in our community and beyond.

I've had a number of roundtables with the Hon. Amanda Rishworth, the former shadow minister, and with the member for Blair, Shayne Neumann, my neighbour, who is now the shadow minister. I pay tribute to the work...
that they have done and the dignified way in which they have stood up for veterans in this country and their advocacy with respect to what needs to happen for the veteran community.

We know the bill today introduces three important measures that will provide better and more appropriate support for our veterans: it will implement the government's commitment to create the Veteran Family Advocate, it will provide changes to support veterans' transition from the Australian Defence Force to civilian employment, and it will ensure all recipients of the Department of Veterans' Affairs gold cards are treated equally in terms of their benefits. As I said in my opening remarks, it's vital that we look after the men and women who've looked after us. Whilst Labor does support the bill, I want to take this opportunity to raise my voice in the parliament about ongoing concerns within the ADF and the wider Australian community about suicide among serving and ex-serving ADF personnel and, in particular, about ex-serving ADF personnel who face increased risk of suicide.

Regardless of the role or capacity in which any veteran served our country, it has been a unique and critical role in the joint effort to protect Australia, its peoples and our freedoms. This bill recognises this by implementing the government's commitment, announced on 5 February this year, to create the Veteran Family Advocate. It also provides changes to support the transition from Australia Defence Force service to civilian employment and, as I said, it sorts out the issues for gold card recipients.

Earlier this year, the government announced two roles: the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, which will be complemented by the Veteran Family Advocate. I note that, while the government intends to bring forward legislation to establish the national commissioner later this year, and while this bill will establish the Veteran Family Advocate as a new commissioner to work as part of the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, Labor has had serious concerns about the government's related proposal of a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. We would prefer a royal commission into veteran suicide. From a procedural point of view, we believe it's a bit premature to establish the Veteran Family Advocate position ahead of that of the national commissioner.

This has been an important issue for the Leader of the Opposition, supported by every single member of the Labor team. They have been working alongside a number of groups, and, on the issue of a royal commission, I want to acknowledge, in particular, the work of my friend the member for Solomon, Luke Gosling OAM. I acknowledge his service in this House, because we know this powerful issue must be addressed.

Regarding the substance, we welcome the announcement of the advocate as a stand-alone measure; we just want to make sure that the advocate is appropriately resourced and is able to do its job. These commissions are responsible for supporting the administration of veterans legislation and providing advice to the minister and government in relation to these acts. They will be responsible for directly engaging with the families of veterans to help shape policy, improve the design of all veteran programs and services, including mental health support and services.

I hear the stories of veterans and their families. I'm very proud to represent a number of ADF serving personnel, with a large amount of Defence Force housing located in the Oxley electorate, in the suburbs of Forest Lake, Springfield and Springfield Lakes, heading out towards Amberley Air Force base. I've met with the various veterans groups, such as the RSL sub-branches, and also with a number of local serving personnel whom I was able to visit personally when I was privileged enough to travel to the Middle East on a special trip last year to visit Operation Okra. As we know, a number of members of parliament have taken the opportunity to join the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program, which gives that rare insight into the sometimes dangerous but important work that our service men and women are undertaking. Currently there are around 2,000 ADF personnel deployed in the Middle East region.

On my trip to the Middle East last year I was joined by a number of colleagues: the member for Fisher, from Queensland, and also Senator Kimberley Kitching, a senator from Victoria. I was particularly honoured to meet with local residents who were serving there and to hear about their concerns and issues. All of them had one common message to me: 'If you get the opportunity, make sure you speak for us.' And that's what I intend to do for as long as I serve in this place. On the trip I was honoured to meet everyday Australians, who are also mums and dads, who have chosen to fight for the peace and freedom of our country. As a result, I wanted to speak on this bill today, to look at all the measures we can put in place to help, to prevent mental health issues and of course to ensure suicide prevention. One suicide is too many.

The veteran family advocate will have the necessary independence to represent the views of veteran families to the DVA and, I would hope, influence policymaking outcomes. It's critical to their role. Many veterans have complained about the lack of assistance they receive when they transition out of the ADF. I'm really hopeful and confident that the advocate will go and sit with the families, hear their stories, listen to the advice and be able to better shape veteran policy in ways that will reduce the risks of personnel issues and leave surrounding the ADF.
Labor believes that the advocate would make the voice of veterans' families louder and stronger—a voice that will be heard and one that will shape policies and decision-making to promote better mental health outcomes for our veterans.

Many Defence and veteran families have also told me they simply don't feel that they're being heard when it comes to support and assistance. So I really hope that this is another opportunity for the government to hear the pleas—and the cries, in some cases—to establish a genuine independent royal commission into Defence personnel and veterans suicide. And I'm very sad to report to the House that from 2001 to 2017 there were 419 suicides among Reserves and both serving and ex-serving ADF personnel. That's why I was really pleased that going into the last election we took in a strategy around better engagement by the DVA with military and veteran families and identifying improvements to family support. Moreover, last year's Productivity Commission report on the veteran support system recommended better family engagement and support by agencies. In the lead-up to the 2019 election campaign I stood in front of veterans groups and RSLs who were very concerned about some of the recommendations that were coming through and how a future-focused Department of Veterans' Affairs would be shaped.

We all want to support veterans to the best of our ability. Every member of this House wants that, and I hope this new position will achieve better outcomes for our veterans and their families. Schedule 2 of the bill facilitates flexibility in the way programs can be designed to assist the transition from the ADF to the civilian workforce. Once established through regulations, the program will provide eligible veterans with both pre- and post-employment assistance. It's a really critical element for veterans, when they are transitioning, to have clear pathways, equal opportunities into the workforce, career advice, coaching, assistance, skills transition, resume and interview preparation and one-on-one peer support so that they understand the styles of communication in civilian employment, which clearly can be different from the important work that they have undertaken.

Schedule 3 of the bill rectifies the unintended omission that has meant that the energy supplement has not been payable to some DVA gold card holders because they are covered under a different piece of legislation. It's not a huge amount of money, but for veterans, particularly for seniors, who rely on that support and particularly with these rising costs, where we're seeing the cost of living go through the roof, and with uncertain times in the economy, heading in towards recession, every little dollar counts. I'm really pleased that, although it's only a minor change, it's an important change for a number of people who had fallen through those cracks. I thank the government for taking action on that.

I thank the shadow minister Shayne Neumann for his advocacy. He worked constructively with the government. I think this area of public policy is one where we can work together and is one where we should work together to ensure that those brave men and women who have served our country—and I thank each and every one of them for their service—see this parliament standing shoulder to shoulder together to ensure not only their voices are heard but their issues are addressed. Together we can show better respect and more support for our ADF personnel and veterans.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:06): I’m very pleased to speak on the Veterans’ Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting The Wellbeing of Veterans and their Families) Bill 2020. I just want to thank the member for Oxley for his contribution and for his ongoing care of veterans and service people who live in his electorate and more broadly. He takes a real interest by getting out there during the ADF parliamentary programs to see what our amazing women and men are doing in the ADF in defence of our nation and our interests. I'll just cover the legislation briefly and then make some observations. The legislation contains three measures, as we've heard, which are all aimed at better meeting the needs of veterans and their families. The first implements the PM’s commitment to appoint the Veteran Family Advocate, announced on 5 February this year, whilst the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention was being announced. This new position recognises the critical role families play in supporting the health and wellbeing of the veteran community. When I'm speaking to veterans, they often say the only thing that's keeping them going, if they're experiencing difficulties, is their families—the love and support of their families. And those families need support. The Veteran Family Advocate will engage with these families, with a strong focus on mental health and suicide prevention.

I know, as a veteran and as the son of a veteran who was the son of a veteran, families do play a critical role. Every time I get to speak with people in my community, which is often, whether they be veterans, current serving personnel, finished serving personnel or families, I hear there is a real need for more support. That's why this role, I think, is very important. The day-to-day role of the advocate will include examining issues relating to veterans' and families' policy, benefits, entitlements and health outcomes.
We on this side as the federal opposition trust the individual advocate and their support will have all the necessary independence to represent the views of veterans and their families to DVA and to also influence policymaking in a real way.

We, the federal opposition, do have serious concerns about the government's related proposal, and I spoke about that earlier this week. The National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention may have been a recommendation of a full royal commission. I think it may very well have been. But I do wonder whether it may be a bit premature to establish the Veteran Family Advocate before the national commissioner. I do wonder that. But I do sincerely hope for the best. I hope that the individuals chosen for those roles are well experienced and have lived experience, because that will help them be the best possible representative that they can be.

I echo the amendment of my colleague, Matt Keogh, the member for Burt, which notes the government's 'stubborn refusal to enact a full royal commission into veteran suicide and its insistence instead on establishing a national commissioner'. I have been on the record many, many times as saying that it is, I think, the majority of veterans' views that a royal commission is required. As I said, I think this permanent national commissioner may very well have been a recommendation of a royal commission—but more on that in a minute.

The second measure in the bill will help to make the transition and journey from being an ADF member to being part of the civilian workforce smoother. It will include developing skills for transition to civilian life, such as equipping veterans to interview effectively when they're going for jobs as well as coaching them to adapt to the way of life and to work on civvy street. The third and final measure will ensure that all veteran gold card holders are treated equitably, as we would all hope for. Together, these amendments should deliver better outcomes for veterans and their families and Labor supports them.

But let's not forget the important context for why we are passing these measures today. The government's announcement in February came after widespread calls from veterans, the media and Labor for a royal commission into veteran suicide. There was a huge tide of public support for a royal commission into veteran suicide that became a core political issue late last year. It is that movement, that tide of public support, to which we owe these improvements today. So I want to thank all those who pushed for a royal commission—and they continue to push—because they have the best interests of veterans and their families at heart. I ask them to maintain the rage.

Throughout COVID-19 and the bushfires, the petition begun by Julie-Ann Finney, who lost her son tragically to suicide, like so many other mothers and fathers have, has only continued to grow. It's currently an impressive size of 342,505 petitioners. It's probably gone up more today. That's equivalent to 2½ Darwins or to 10 Gladstones. It's bigger than Geelong and Newcastle. It is an incredible achievement. But of course Julie-Ann simply provided a method by which the Australian people, patriots of this nation, could say there has been too much of young women and men, Australian patriots, taking their own lives, dying by suicide, and we need to make it stop. That huge number of people who have taken the time to sign that petition also says that this is an issue of central importance to the lives of veterans, their families and their communities around Australia. I think it says that we should not relent in our commitment to treating veteran suicide as a national scourge and that we need to drive down these shocking figures as a matter of urgent priority. And I say that that is a bipartisan commitment. I know that those opposite—the member for Herbert, the member for Canning and others—have lost mates, as I have. They don't want to see any more veteran suicides. But I guess we differ in the focus on doing everything we can, and a royal commission with a fixed start and end date would enable so many voices to be heard. That would give us recommendations and it would fix these issues.

Some say that we already know what to do. I think there is a lot more that we can learn if we listen, and, as I said, the national commissioner may very likely have been one of the recommendations, and we would have had a lot better result. It was probably the No. 1 issue on the public's mind coming into Christmas—and we remember that then the fires started—but it's important for us all to remember that it's not just about what's in the news cycle today, this week or next month. The news cycle will move on, but nothing will move on for a lot of veterans until the support they need is delivered. The federal government has a huge role to play in that, and I can assure them that veterans and their families are still very passionate about this issue. They want to see that everything possible is being done. We know that there are still veterans dying by suicide, so we need to do as much as we can as soon as we can.

We acknowledge that the family advocate and the national commissioner are steps in the right direction, and we understand that the national commissioner will be established through legislation to be introduced later this year. Whilst acknowledging all of that, Labor continues to call for a royal commission into veteran suicides because it is the best way to deal with this issue. We can walk and chew gum at the same time; we can continue the work to make DVA more user friendly, to have better coordination between ex-service organisations and to give more support to families. We can continue to do these things whilst a royal commission is held. As I said, it's
important to recognise that the national commissioner could very well have been, and in all likelihood would have been, a recommendation through a holistic royal commission which had a clear start and end date.

This bill is intended to deliver better support for veterans and families in transition, particularly through the creation of the Veteran Family Advocate and more support for veterans’ employment. These are all very important things. I want to acknowledge the work of the member for Kingston previously, and now the member for Blair, in keeping a focus on family engagement and support strategies. I will continue to work with them, to make sure that these services are delivered, and are delivered on the ground through veterans recovery and wellbeing centres. Prior to the last election, as honourable members would remember, Labor committed to rolling out seven such veterans centres across Australia, in Perth, Townsville, Ipswich, Adelaie, Wodonga, Nowra and in my electorate of Solomon—Darwin and Palmerston, in the Greater Darwin area, the northern capital of Australia. Of course, Labor was happy that the coalition embraced our policy with its own promise of veterans wellbeing centres. Unfortunately, more than a year on from the election, progress on centres differ and some are well behind schedule.

I remind the minister that during the election campaign he and the Prime Minister announced that the Darwin centre would be completed in 2020, which is why I would like to take this opportunity to update the House on the progress towards a wellbeing centre in Darwin. Mates4Mates, a great ex-service organisation, is going through the process of establishing a business case with the Northern Territory government. It is exciting to hear about the services that they will be providing. I do acknowledge that things have slowed down a bit with COVID-19, in terms of what can be done on the ground and travel and so forth. I acknowledge all of that. But I just ask the minister and the department and everyone involved to move as quickly as possible to establish that wellbeing centre in my electorate. I also note that the ex-service organisation Soldier On are recruiting for a Darwin based staff member to run a Pathways program. The RSL will also be rolling out an employment program in partnership with Mates4Mates. I have asked and I will continue to ask these national ex-service organisations to coordinate their efforts to ensure the best possible service delivery to the veterans of the Northern Territory. It’s great to have some movement in this regard. I just want to acknowledge Billeroy House, an initiative of Darwin RSL, who had a morning tea yesterday for veterans and their families. To the team at Billeroy House: thanks for everything you’re doing there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): The question is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question. I call the member for Warringah.

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (13:21): This bill, the Veterans’ Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020, creates a new position for the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to represent the families of veterans. It also enables the provision of assistance or benefits to former Australian Defence Force members to assist them in that transition to civilian life, and it extends the eligibility for the quarterly energy supplement to holders of gold cards, who had previously been excluded. These are important changes that I very much support.

Warringah has a strong community of veterans with over 1,300 veterans and over 2,500 clients of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Some of the most iconic sites in our electorate are dedicated to and commemorate our diggers—the Mosman War Memorial, Poppy Park in Forrestville, the North Head memorial and the Freshwater Anzac Precinct incorporating Soldiers Avenue and Jacka Park. These are important monuments and services for our veteran community. The recognition of veterans’ service brings us together as a nation each year on significant days like Anzac Day. The Australian Defence Force serves as more than a job. It is a part of a veteran’s identity, community and extended family, and is often their home.

I wish to make comment on the importance of the bill in giving prominence to veterans’ wellbeing and to the significant role that families play in supporting veterans through their transition. I also wish to highlight the efforts of local veteran support centres in the Warringah community. A report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released late last year found that there were 419 suicides in serving reserve and ex-service ADF personnel between 2001 and 2017. That is far too many. The rate of suicide for ex-servicemen was 18 per cent higher than in civilian Australian men. Similarly, the rate of suicide for ex-serving women was also higher than in the civilian population. The rate of suicide in serving men and reservists, though, was 48 per cent lower than in the general population. This data clearly shows that the transition point from service life to civilian life is a pain point in the journey for a veteran.

It is not only suicide that plagues our veterans. Compared with those who haven't served, our veterans are also twice as likely to be imprisoned. These are very concerning statistics. Further, veterans are 2½ times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population. All these statistics point to a problem and I certainly look forward to the government focusing on the problem to find solutions. We need to improve the support provided to...
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our veterans to ease this transition and help them redefine themselves outside the military. It is such a substantial change to their way of life that it must be done with assistance and with better support.

I welcome the appointment of the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. This role is important in drawing attention to, and working through, the key issues faced by veterans in their transition and throughout their lives post service. I also welcome the establishment of the Veteran Family Advocate through this bill. There is no doubt that families are on the front line of this problem and, in dealing with this transition, they are the first to experience mental health struggles of veterans. They need assistance too. The family advocate will directly engage with the families of veterans to improve the design of all veteran programs and services, including, and very importantly, mental health supports and services. We need to support families, integrate them in the support structure and empower them to assist veterans with their transition. We need everyone to be on board. These two roles will work together to reinforce the work already begun by the Department of Veterans' Affairs through the Veteran Centric Reform program. I encourage the government to continue with the full implementation of this program to realise the benefits of the reform. Putting veterans and their families at the heart of the services that the government offers is essential to the success of any measures to improve the mental and social outcomes of veterans in their transition.

Locally, I am very proud to talk about the Veterans Centre Sydney Northern Beaches and to report on the efforts that the centre goes to in supporting our veteran community. This centre continues to support many current and former ADF personnel and their families. Through the COVID-19 lockdown, the centre has developed a rapid response plan and proactively intervened in high-complexity cases. The handover between the ADF and the DVA rehabilitation teams can often be a long administrative process. In some cases, it can take up to four weeks before a client will be contacted by a new DVA rehab consultant. In certain instances, this can be too long. The veterans centre offers to bridge this gap to ensure that the transitioning member is not left unsupported whilst they navigate their way out of the service environment and into civilian life. They currently serve 137 veterans and have about 20 on the waiting list. They have reported a quite considerable increase during this COVID-19 lockdown, with a 25 per cent increase in the number of inquiries during recent weeks. As with the rest of the community, the centre has not been immune to the economic impact of the COVID-19 restrictions. So, moving into next year, funds to support veterans in significant distress are limited, and they will be seeking additional funding from both fundraising and public funds to continue their support.

Locally, there is an interesting project that I have brought to the attention of the minister which I would commend for further consideration. That is the 10 Terminal project, which is quite appropriate today in the context of the release of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust review that relates to this location. Locally, it's a very important project and has considerable support from the community in Mosman. It is a proposal for 10 Terminal facility at Middle Head to be a transition hub providing a live-in, integrated, wraparound service to support transition from service to civilian life. It is located in an iconic, beautiful bushland area but close to the urban centre of Sydney and can be the ideal stepping stone into civilian life. The proposed transition hub would be located at a historically important military site with connections to the ADF to this day through HMAS Penguin. I acknowledge the correspondence received from the minister. I thank him for considering this issue and urge him, on its behalf, to continue. The transition hub concept remains on the table and we will be working with the relevant parties to further the concept through applications for veterans and community grant funds.

Finally, I commend this legislation and the attention devoted to this important issue of veteran wellbeing. It is essential for the strength of our community that we continue to support the men and women who have served in the Australian Defence Force and their families.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Queen's Birthday Honours

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (13:30): The Queen's birthday honours recognised outstanding members of the electorate of Macquarie. Christine Killinger received an OAM for her work with Cancer Wellness Support, Slow Food Blue Mountains and the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce. And I know her also as an active Rotarian. Wayne Rose was awarded and OAM recognising his dedication to Australian boxing. He has chaired the referees and judges committee since 2009 and officiated at international competitions, including the Olympics, for nearly 30 years. OAM recipient Marie Standen was the founder of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group 20 years ago. This group has changed lives as it assists refugees moving into the community and speaks out on their behalf. An Ambulance Service Medal was awarded in the Blue Mountains to Steven Lobley, recognising his 30-year commitment as a paramedic, in particular his work on the specialist wilderness and remote area response team.
The Australian Corrections Medal was awarded to Louisa Van Mal, who has committed herself to the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates at Corrective Services New South Wales. Group Captain Karon Millett was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her work in cyberspace workforce development. Air Vice-Marshal Iervasi was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross to recognise his operational oversight during the Middle East operations. We commend them to the rest of this parliament.

**Chisholm Electorate: Box Hill City Oval**

Ms LIU (Chisholm) (13:31): Community facilities such as Box Hill City Oval are incredibly important for local communities. Box Hill City Oval stages eight state and local sporting leagues, with 2,300 players and coaches using the grounds each year. It is also home to the Box Hill Hawks, which were among the first VFL clubs to enter a team in the VFL women's competition in 2017.

The proposed upgrades of the oval will not only provide much-needed sporting infrastructure for players, including women's change rooms and expanding the range of sports that can be played at the grounds; it will also provide new activity spaces which can be used by local community groups and businesses to host events and functions. The redevelopment is expected to be used by up to 256,000 local residents. I have met with Jeff Kennett, President of the Hawthorn Football Club; and Kevin Keane, Vice President of the Box Hill Hawks, and both of them also recognise the growing needs of the Box Hill City Oval. I will endeavour to work with my local community and fight for the oval's redevelopment.

**Coalition Government**

Mr HILL (Bruce) (13:33): The Liberals have been playing for fools, wasting taxpayers' money privatising work to expensive consulting firms. I have a transcript of a secret recording reported in the Financial Review yesterday of an astounding admission by a senior leader at consulting firm EY who said:

> Are clients paying less for our services? It really depends. There's parts of our business where there is less activity and some of our competitors are going harder on price, other parts of our business where we are not seeing as much … pressure on price … I'll use government as an example where we are being brought in in a preferred non-compete basis and we're seeing it as an opportunity to hold our pricing, in fact inch it up a little bit.

EY's candid admission is a scandal of this government's own making. The government's sloppy procurement without competitive pressure means that once the big firms get on the government's panel list they jack up the prices for the taxpayer.

The Auditor-General revealed that now 80 per cent of the work from the government to the big four firms is not even consulting. That's $640 million last year of everyday work that should be done more cheaply in the Australian Public Service. Australians are sick of the Liberals' staff caps, cuts and privatisation of public services. They don't buy it any more. An urgent public inquiry by the public accounts and audit committee is needed to get to the bottom of the Liberals' explosion in the use of consultants and dodgy temporary labour hire firms.

**COVID-19: McCrindle Research Survey**

Mr LEESER (Berrowra) (13:34): Mark McCrindle, an entrepreneur in my electorate, founded McCrindle Research, a small business invested in helping organisations understand social and demographic trends and respond to the changing needs of Australians. They've recently done some very interesting research looking at how Australians are responding to the global pandemic. They surveyed Australians in March in the initial stages of lockdown and again in June as restrictions started to ease. The research paints a picture of how incredibly resilient and community minded Australians are. While 28 per cent of Australians said their finances had been most negatively affected during the pandemic and 17 per cent said their mental health had been, more than nine in 10 Australians believe the restrictions put in place to flatten the curve have been worth it. For many Australians surveyed, there's also been a personal commitment to helping others, with 21 per cent increasing their financial giving to charities.

Australians have made the most of opportunities. People have enjoyed spending more time with family, enjoyed the slower pace of life or used this time to prioritise financial saving. They'd like these things to continue, and the tide's now beginning to turn. Phase 1 of McCrindle's research in March showed that, while 27 per cent of Australians were feeling hopeful about the future, in June that proportion of Australians feeling hopeful and optimistic had increased to 35 per cent. McCrindle's insights about the attitude of Australians present encouraging news for us all as we face the road ahead. I thank Mark and his team at McCrindle for their ongoing good work.

**COVID-19: Northern Territory**

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:36): I have been extremely proud of the Territory and Territorians throughout this COVID-19 crisis and now into the economic recovery. The NT has, once again, carried a large burden of this latest national emergency, as we've always done. Back in February, we used the workers village out at Howard...
Springs. It was utilised as a quarantining hub for Australian citizens and permanent residents evacuated from overseas, many of whom were in mainland China during the worst of the pandemic. Later, we held evacuees from the *Diamond Princess*. This facility is still being used to isolate people who do not live in Darwin—those who do not have a home, the homeless. In the midst of the national tragedy, the Territory kept all Australians safe, reflecting the spirit that I am so proud to represent.

This Territorian attitude can be seen in grassroots, self-organised community groups who are looking after their neighbours and the international students. The Northern Territory government's strong leadership in the crisis has also been widely recognised, both locally and internationally. This reminds us that a strong Territory means a strong Australia. Territorians stuck together when it mattered, and I'm proud to say that the Territory keeps going from strength to strength, protecting our people whilst at the same time moving forward through this COVID-19 response.

**Bell, Flight Lieutenant John Napier (Dinger)**

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (13:37): Today marks the 80th anniversary of the tragic wartime accident that took the life of John Napier (Dinger) Bell. John was born on 25 April 1916, son of a local storekeeper and raised at Farina, now a ghost town with a group dedicated to its restoration in South Australia's far north. John joined our RAAF in 1935 and spent time training pilots to fly the Seagull amphibious biplane, launched off the HMAS *Sydney* and other ships with a 100-pound cordite charge. The Seagull V became known as the 'Walrus' with the RAF and the RAAF.

Because of his experience, Bell was directed to carry out a secret mission to evacuate the wife and child of the French president Charles de Gaulle, who was already in exile in England, from the French village Ploudaniel as the nation fell to the invading German forces. In the early hours of 18 June 1940, under direct orders from Winston Churchill, Bell flew with three crew from England to Brittany on that top secret mission. It ended in disaster and all four lost their lives when the aircraft crashed in heavy fog and burned. Tragically, Madam de Gaulle and her children had managed to escape from the port of Brest just hours earlier by boat.

The townsfolk of Ploudaniel recovered the bodies and buried the crew with full honours in the local church cemetery as the Germans invaded. The graves were carefully tended by locals throughout the duration of the war, and each year they hold a march.

**COVID-19: Arts**

Ms PAYNE (Canberra) (13:39): Art is a central part of how we express and define ourselves as a society. It is how we tell our stories, it's an important vehicle for political commentary and it's where we turn for inspiration, for comfort and for entertainment, not least as we've dealt with this pandemic. But this government obviously doesn't recognise that, as they have left our arts sector out to dry at this critical time. Our arts community were a huge support to everyone throughout the bushfires and were among the first and hardest hit by the COVID-19 restrictions. But, despite Labor's calls, this government has done nothing to support them.

In my electorate of Canberra, the arts community thrives in spaces like the Ainslie Arts Centre, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra Glassworks, Gorman House Arts Centre, Manuka Arts Centre, Street Theatre, Watson Arts Centre and Megalo Print Studio and Gallery. And there is the Canberra Museum and Gallery, which is once again open, and the Canberra Theatre Centre, which is keeping the community entertained with free online shows through the CTC@Home program.

This week, I met with the Capital Arts Patrons' Organisation, who have distributed over $2.5 million in arts fellowships and awards with the support of the Canberra community. In contrast to this government, the ACT Labor government has of course stepped up to support our artists through this with grants of up to $10,000 each to 66 local artists and a $1 million investment in Canberra arts organisations. It's time that this government stepped up and supported our arts sector.

**Lindsay Electorate: J Sinclair Engineering**

Mrs McINTOSH (Lindsay) (13:40): Western Sydney is full of aspirational people. We know this because over 300,000 people commute out of Western Sydney every day for work. Lindsay is home to people who are working hard in their small businesses and working hard to get ahead for their families. To recognise their hard work and to fight for them, I would like to talk about Jeff and his wife, Tracey, who own J Sinclair Engineering.

Like many people in Lindsay, Jeff and Tracey are passionate about Australian manufacturing and Australian made products. When I visited them, Tracey even made me a cake. Jeff has been working in manufacturing for 42 years, and he and Tracey sometimes spend seven days a week working in their family business to contribute to our community and to keep local people in jobs.
Most days, Jeff starts at 5.30 am and finishes at 7.30 at night. He's worked in manufacturing since he was 15, and he's now 57 and running his own business. His business works primarily with the manufacturing and rail industries and has been servicing and fixing machines for 15 years. Six years ago, Jeff was fortunate to buy an Australian manufacturing business that has been making Australian machines since 1986. Because of his great experience in his business, Jeff is doing really great work every single day, working hard, employing local people in his business and keeping manufacturing in Western Sydney alive.

**COVID-19: Manufacturing**

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (13:42): We called in members of parliament in North Queensland to a briefing by one of the two or three biggest major hospitals in northern Australia. They went through whether they had the weapons to fight COVID with, and they had no disinfectants whatsoever. In light of this, United Petroleum and Manildra responded. United Petroleum immediately reopened their Dalby plant, producing 60 million litres of high-grade—Listerine is made out of ethanol—disinfectant. They were famous in North Queensland because they were the first one to bring the petrol prices down. They brought our petrol prices in North Queensland down some 35c or 40c. So God bless United Petroleum. They opened the Dalby plant, producing 60 million litres of disinfectant.

The hospital in North Queensland has zero disinfectant, and guess where they bought it from? They bought their disinfectant from China. All of Queensland Health bought their disinfectant from China. We're told the great supermarket giants—Woolworths and Coles—bought all of their disinfectant from China. All of the government departments that were supposed to be looking after us bought their disinfectant from China. Guess where COVID-19 came from? China. *(Time expired)*

**Hindu Council of Australia**

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (13:44): I rise today to acknowledge the excellent work of the Hindu Council of Australia. The Hindu Council of Australia's headquarters is based in my electorate of Reid—in Homebush, very close to my electorate office, in fact. The Hindu Council has gathered volunteers and sponsors together to help those in need during the coronavirus pandemic. Through initiatives such as the Karma Kitchen and the Hindu Benevolent Fund, they have assisted with activities like providing basic grocery supplies, sourcing employment for those out of work due to the pandemic, counselling services for students and helping to arrange temporary alternative accommodation for those in need. I recently visited the Karma Kitchen, where meals prep and packaging essential food ingredients were put together. Essential items such as rice and spices were packaged up. As I walked into the hall, I immediately felt the warmth of the volunteers, who gave up their time to help those in need. So it is fitting that I acknowledge their community service in this place. I look forward to working with the Hindu Council of Australia for many years to come.

**Richmond Electorate: Newspapers**

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (13:45): I rise to acknowledge and pay tribute to the local print media on the New South Wales North Coast. It's deeply concerning that several of our local newspaper will soon become digitally. It was recently announced that a number of local News Corp papers will soon stop printing. This includes the Ballina Shire Advocate, the Tweed Daily News, the Byron Shire News and The Northern Star. These closures are a devastating blow for our local community.

Local newspapers and local journalists play an essential role in breaking news and telling the stories that matter to us and our communities. Over decades these newspapers have been a noticeboard for local events, sports and announcements. Our newspapers have also been an essential service in terms of reporting bushfires, floods and, more recently, the coronavirus pandemic. I've been very fortunate to have worked with so many local editors, journalists and photographers at all these papers, and one thing they all have in common is a deep commitment to our community. I wish them well into the future and thank them for all their hard work over so many years.

Thankfully, we still have outstanding independent papers in my region, including the Byron Echo, the Tweed Valley Weekly and, indeed, The Nimbin Good Times, based in Page but actually read by many people in my area. They're all proudly run locally and independently and they produce incredibly informative local productions. I note the very vital, important roles that they play and I look forward to an increased circulation for all of these independent papers.

Our print media and our media diversity are essentially important, and I encourage locals to continue to support the local independent papers.

**Heritage Bank**

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (13:46): All members of this parliament, I'm sure, are rightly interested in the performance of Australian banks. Indeed, it's a topic of discussions, debates, committee hearings and even a royal
commission. It's incumbent on me to refer to Heritage Bank, the country's largest customer owned banking organisation, based in my city of Toowoomba, which has been named by Forbes magazine for the second year in a row the No.1 bank in Australia. This is their second annual list of the world's best banks, and to have our bank again top the listing in Australia is indeed a great honour. It was also named Australia's most authentic bank by international analysts J.D. Power earlier this year. This was in terms of overall satisfaction, the subcategories of trust, terms and conditions, customer services, digital services and financial advice. I give a big shout-out to the chairman of the board, Kerry Betros; the CEO, Peter Lock; and all of the staff of Heritage Bank based in Toowoomba. To have them focused on performance not only in our region but right across the nation, with millions of Australians affected by their activities, is indeed a great honour for our region. It's a great benefit for the whole nation. They are doing us proud.

**Gilmore Electorate: Australia Post**

**Mrs PHILLIPS** (Gilmore) (13:48): In areas like my electorate the local posties are more than just someone who delivers letters. They are friends and neighbours. They are part of our community. The electorate of Gilmore has one of the highest unemployment rates in New South Wales, and keeping our posties in their jobs is vital. Not only that; the humble letter is an important part of country life. So I am absolutely appalled that the government is putting one in four postie jobs at risk with its cuts to Australia Post, and so are people in my electorate. Paul from Sussex Inlet said: 'This is a disgrace. Our postie is hardly coping as it is. They need more staff, not less. This is another wilful, destructive, privatising job-cutting of the public sector that must be stopped. Our postal services are vital—and can you imagine the mess they will make if this is all left to contractors?' Jacob from Bomaderry said: 'These changes have been proposed within six months of Aus Post staff working hazardous smoke conditions and delivering through the coronavirus pandemic. Please help protect the jobs of posties in Gilmore.'

The Prime Minister is using this pandemic to strip away more essential services from our country areas. Well, I can tell Mr Morrison we are just not going to sit here and take it. We cannot afford more job cuts. I stand with our posties. I want more jobs, not fewer.

**Sunshine Coast Airport**

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (13:49): Deputy Speaker, the first step in any growth strategy is to protect your core. It is to do more with your strengths. One of the great strengths of the Sunshine Coast is our airport, and it's not just any airport. This is now a fully-fledged international airport with a brand new runway opened just last week, and it, is indeed, open for business. This government has delivered for this project. There was a raft of approvals, a reclassification of the airport and a $181 million concessional loan—a trifecta, effectively. And today, in the face of all the challenges around COVID-19, the Sunshine Coast Airport has announced a deal with Alliance Airlines for direct flights for the very first time between the Sunshine Coast and Cairns, a route that could not have opened up unless they had this new runway. Of course, if and when the Queensland Premier ever decides to open the borders, we will see the interstate flights resume. When there is a 'trans-Tasman bubble', we will see the flights to New Zealand resume. And when the world opens up post-COVID there will be a direct link for the first time to Australia's lifestyle capital, the Sunshine Coast. Congratulations to the Sunny Coast Airport.  

(Time expired)

**COVID-19: Employment**

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Whitlam) (13:51): The latest job figures have just been released, and they are horrendous: 230,000 people have lost their jobs in the last month alone. Women and young people are the hardest hit. These are real lives, and real people being left behind. There are fewer people in work and more people who have given up hope, and even the people with a job are getting fewer hours. Every day out of work is a human tragedy. This is a preview of what we will see in September if we do not change course. There are serious problems, but they're not being met with serious solutions. We cannot cut our way to recovery—because behind every cut that is planned by this government is a family who cannot pay their bills or a young person who is struggling to put a roof over their head. We need a plan. A slogan is not a plan. An announcement that has never delivered is not a plan. Cutting support for people without a job or for small businesses doing it tough is not a plan. We cannot cut our way to recovery. This government needs to stop leaving people behind. Serious problems require serious solutions.

**Braddon Electorate: Rapid Relief Team**

**Mr PEARCE** (Braddon) (13:53): Across the north-west, the west coast and King Island, our dedicated charitable and not-for-profit organisations are at the forefront of our local support network, and they're there in good times and in bad. This has become even more critical in recent months, given the extraordinary challenges for our local communities with the COVID virus, and our local charities and other organisations have really stepped up. Recently I teamed up with Rapid Relief Team, RRT, to roll out their family food box program across
the region. The Food Box initiative provides immediate food relief for families in crisis. Each food box contains enough supplies to feed a family of four for around a week. Initially, I funded the purchase of 160 of these boxes, which RRT is currently distributing to councils and emergency and crisis organisations throughout the Braddon electorate. I'm delighted to advise the House today that RRT has now matched my donation, doubling to 320 the number of family food boxes available to those most in need. I can't thank Nelson from RRT enough for his support and Chris, the owner of CRE Transport and Logistics Services, a great Tasmanian freight organisation, for donating the transport of the boxes to Tasmania. RRT have been busy during the fires, the floods and now the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with other great charities, they make so much difference to so many people at the times that they need it most.

Employment

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (13:54): Sadly, this government is leaving Australians behind. Today, we saw unemployment figures at 7.1 per cent, with nearly 200,000 jobs going in the month of May. But we know, sadly, that this doesn't reflect the true state of the economy. We know that in fact it is much, much worse, with underemployment and the casualisation of the workforce on the rise in this country, and hundreds of thousands of Australians dropping out of the job market altogether.

Today, on the day when we see how unemployment, underemployment and casualisation of the workforce are on the rise, we find out that this Prime Minister cannot wait to get rid of the JobKeeper supplement. As soon as the Eden-Monaro by-election is done, this Prime Minister will reveal his plan to get rid of the JobKeeper supplement. Meanwhile, people in my electorate, in some of the hardest-hit suburbs—Elwood, St Kilda and Port Melbourne—and people working in retail, hospitality, tourism, arts and entertainment have been left behind by this government. Those opposite like to laugh at people losing their jobs, but we will stand up for the people this government is leaving behind.

What's their answer? What's their plan? The home renovation program, where 7,000 people are going to get a renovation on their home. I've worked it out: on average that's about 47 people per electorate. That means that 99,953 people are going to miss out. But that's their plan. They have no plan; this government is leaving people behind as the unemployment figures rise in this country.

Central Queensland Rural Health

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (13:56): Central Queensland Rural Health has been operating for over 25 years, providing quality health services to the residents of Central Queensland. They represent GPs, allied health professionals, nursing staff and community members. New board members were announced this week, and I'd like to welcome Margo Purcell, Dr Michael Belanogoff, Dr Richard Tan, Jess Burrey, Wendy Peebles and Zak Nichols. And I thank the outgoing board members, Dr John Evans and Natalie Dunk-Andrews.

On another matter, back in April this year the state member, Glenn Butcher, and the Palaszczuk government announced the purchase of the Mater Hospital in Gladstone at an estimated cost of $20 million. I have not heard anything since. I have contacted Glenn Butcher's office, looking for an update, and still have had no word. I hope this is not another political ploy. We don't want to lose more doctors or services for Gladstone.

Sheean, Ordinary Seaman Edward (Teddy)

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (13:57): The point of having an independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal is to ensure that the only considerations are the evidence and merit. The tribunal unanimously supported Tasmanian hero Teddy Sheean getting a VC. But the Prime Minister tells us that we need a review of the review, all because he can't admit that he got it wrong and that the government should just act on the recommendations, which were unanimous.

Now we hear that the Liberal Party pollster Media Reach is conducting polling in Tasmania on Sheean receiving the VC. After asking respondents about how they would vote if an election were held today and how likely they were to change their mind between now and 2022, they were asked, 'Which issue do you feel is the most important for Tasmania right now, that being something that your federal politicians could do something about?' Awarding Teddy Sheean a VC was listed as an option, amongst others.

Then respondents were asked whether they were aware or unaware of a random selection of news from the past month, including this question: 'Were you aware that the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States have turned violent? And were you previously aware that the federal government rejected a recommendation to award the VC to Tasmanian World War II sailor Teddy Sheean?'

This is entirely inappropriate! A decision to award a VC is not a popularity contest. On the merits, Teddy Sheean is worthy of the Victoria Cross.
Mr PASIN (Barker) (13:58): This week, the Premier of Victoria said:

I don't want to be offensive to South Australians, but why would you want to go there? Premier, I get it. You've had a bad week! You've had a really bad week! Premier, you've been burnt courtesy of some particularly bad behaviour from your Victorian ALP team. I get it, Premier—you need a holiday! I'm always willing to help, so here are some suggestions. How about the Coorong, a wetland of international importance, made famous on the big screen thanks to the movie Storm Boy? Yes, Mr Andrews, that's a natural wonder and it's in South Australia. Thousands of people attend it every year.

Mr Premier, what about the Coonawarra—the home of Australia's best cabernets? Okay, you're a shiraz man—how about the Barossa Valley? That might be more to your liking, or maybe the Riverland to the north. The best fruit, vegetables and nuts are grown there. You also have the tourism offer of the Murray River. I can just see you now, Premier: you're kicking back on a wakeboard and having the time of your life. There's no Somyurek and there's no Byrne; there's just the wind in your hair!

The reasons to come to South Australia, they just roll off the tongue! There is $8.1 billion a year in tourism spend. But, Premier, leave your phone at home. Those text messages, they'll give you heartburn!

The SPEAKER: It being 2 pm, the time for members' statements has concluded.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

JobKeeper Payment

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why won't the Prime Minister admit that this recession is harsher and unemployment queues are longer because he designed JobKeeper that way? Why has the Prime Minister chosen to leave so many Australians behind?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:00): What the Leader of the Opposition has said is simply untrue. That is not why we're seeing what we're seeing happen in this country. The Leader of the Opposition must be clueless when it comes to the reasons this country is in recession and why we have seen so many people find themselves out of work.

Our government, right from the outset of this crisis, understood that it was both a health crisis and an economic crisis. We knew there was a twin crisis to be faced here because of this pandemic. The Leader of the Opposition did not agree with that position. He did not believe that the economic crisis was worthy of the same attention as the health crisis as we set it out, and he criticised the government for seeing it as a twin crisis. But we always knew that we would have to deal with both. That's why we put in place, long before these terrible figures—this awful news of Australians being out of work—the income supports, starting with the safety net of jobseeker and then moving to JobKeeper to ensure that we could now be supporting more than 4½ million people between both of those programs. And again I want to commend Services Australia for the tremendous work they did processing some 800,000 additional Australians' claims to ensure that they were getting the jobseeker support that they need at this time—jobseeker support that was doubled through the COVID supplement.

Our government has been standing by Australians to ensure that they can get through this crisis. Importantly, we have a plan to ensure that not only do we get through this crisis but we come out of this crisis and regain the growth. Our plan is based on ensuring that we're getting unnecessary regulation out of the economy, that we're lowering taxes for Australians, that we're building the infrastructure we need, that we're getting the gas and the energy support needed for our manufacturing industries, that we're building the defence force we need in this important time. The Leader of the Opposition's great plan for the national economy, which we waited so long for, was a national drivers licence—so much for the light on the hill! At least Bob Hawke had the capacity to dream big. It may have been an ambitious claim to take children out of poverty, but what this Leader of the Opposition has descended the Labor Party into as their great plan is a drivers licence.

JobMaker

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (14:03): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how today's unemployment figures underline the importance of the Morrison government's JobMaker plan to drive the economic and jobs growth our nation needs in order to recover from the coronavirus pandemic?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:03): I thank the member for Moncrieff for her question. Among her many talents, before coming to this place she was very active in the entertainment industry as an accomplished musician in her own right. I want to thank all those from the arts and entertainment industry that the Treasurer as well as the minister for communications and the arts and I had the
opportunity to meet when I asked for them to be brought together today. And I thank Mark Vincent for his insistence in bringing them together.

A total of 838,000 Australians have lost their jobs in the past three months. This is another very hard day for Australia, and there are more ahead of us. Some 227,700 Australians lost their jobs in May. This is devastating news for each and every one of them and their families. They have our support to ensure that we are not only there for them with the income support they need during this crisis but we are also ensuring that we're equipping and supporting them and the businesses that either they work for now or we want them to work for in the future so that they will be able to return to employment.

Our JobMaker plan has involved a series of steps. Importantly, it means keeping the virus under control. I commend the Minister for Health, his state counterparts, the premiers and the chief ministers for the work they have done to ensure we can stay on top of the virus, so that we don't see a further wave. But it's also about putting in place the right combination of supports and assistance to individuals who have lost their jobs, so that those who are able can keep connected to employers so there will be real jobs for the future. There is the assistance provided to businesses for cash flow. And there is targeted assistance, like the HomeBuilder program. Already in the arts sector we have provided support specifically to those areas which will be suffering longer because of the restrictions that are in place. These are economy-wide supports—targeted supports.

But our JobMaker program is all about the jobs that we need to create again. Prior to this crisis, our government had been overseeing an economy that had seen 1.5 million jobs created since we were elected. We have to do that again. But the Australian people can have the confidence that they have a government that has done this before and can do it again. This is a government that on the fiscal side was able to restore the budget balance and can do it again with the right set of policies and priorities to ensure we achieve that—lower taxes, less regulation, particularly ensuring major projects can proceed. There is more and better infrastructure, led by the Deputy Prime Minister's program—some $9.8 billion of new works and brought-forward works in the last eight months alone. We are ensuring we are making the big changes to training and skills so we can equip Australians who have lost their jobs to get back into new jobs and so those who need to learn new skills in their jobs can get that skills training. We are getting employers and employees in the room to ensure we can get the enduring changes to workplaces that keep people in jobs. (Time expired)

JobKeeper Program

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. Under this Prime Minister, Australia has entered its first recession in three decades. Australia now has an effective unemployment rate of 11.3 per cent. How many unemployed Australians don't have a job because the Prime Minister deliberately excluded them from JobKeeper?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:07): No-one in this country is unemployed because of the government's responses.

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left! The member for Lalor!

Mr MORRISON: People on my left! The member for Lalor!

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will pause. The member for Lalor will leave under standing order 94(a), and I warn all those others interjecting, particularly those I've asked to stop interjecting all of this week. The Prime Minister has the call.

The member for Lalor then left the chamber.

Mr MORRISON: Australians today are dealing with the news of some 270,000 people losing jobs, almost half of them young people who lost their jobs in May, and we know there will be more because of the recession Australia now finds itself in because of the pandemic. For the Leader of the Opposition to come here to this dispatch box and seek to turn that recession into some sort of partisan accusation, demonstrates not only his complete lack of understanding of economics but an inability—

Honourable members interjecting—

CHAMBER
The Speaker: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. Members on my left and right will cease interjecting. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.

Mr Burke: On direct relevance. To be directly relevant the Prime Minister can refer to dnata workers, arts and entertainment workers, a million casuals. There are plenty of examples he can be relevant with.

The Speaker: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I understand the point the Manager of Opposition Business is making, but none of the points he just made were in the question. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr Morrison: JobKeeper and jobseeker expand the full economy of Australia. What our government has been doing has been responding to the needs of those Australians. This Leader of the Opposition, in the midst of a debacle and corruption scandal that he has overseen—'corruption' a word that his own Labor member has used to describe—

The Speaker: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Prime Minister needs to withdraw that imputation.

Mr Morrison: On the point of order—

Opposition members interjecting—

The Speaker: Members on my left! The member for Kingston will cease interjecting. There's going to be no debate. The Prime Minister needs to withdraw that imputation.

Mr Morrison: Well, if you would allow me—

The Speaker: I am going to say to the Prime Minister that he just needs to withdraw. There was no point of order. I've made a ruling.

Mr Morrison: Mr Speaker, I was not impugning a motive to the Leader of the Opposition. I was referring to the word 'corruption' which was used by the member for Holt to explain the investigation underway. That's what I was referring to and was going on to explain in my answer. That is what I was referring to. It is the word used by the member for Holt. The member for Holt said 'corruption'.

Opposition members interjecting—

The Speaker: The Manager of Opposition Business—

Mr Morrison: But, Mr Speaker, to assist you and to respect your ruling—

Mr Burke interjecting—

Mr Morrison: I've got nothing to do with you, you can sit down. You've already had your point of order. I'm seeking to make the withdrawal.

Mr Morrison: Mr Speaker, I was not impugning a motive to the Leader of the Opposition. I was referring to the word 'corruption' which was used by the member for Holt to explain the investigation underway. That's what I was referring to and was going on to explain in my answer. That is what I was referring to. It is the word used by the member for Holt. The member for Holt said 'corruption'.

Opposition members interjecting—

The Speaker: The Manager of Opposition Business—

Mr Morrison: But, Mr Speaker, to assist you and to respect your ruling—

Mr Burke interjecting—

Mr Morrison: It's got nothing to do with you, you can sit down. You've already had your point of order. I'm seeking to make the withdrawal.

The Speaker: The Manager of Opposition Business will just resume his seat. The Prime Minister.

Mr Morrison: To assist the Speaker and out of respect for the Speaker, I withdraw.

The Speaker: The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order. The member for Kingston is making it even more difficult for the Manager of Opposition Business. I'm just going to say I will deal with any interjections during this period in the way members can predict. I find it incredible that they want me to rule on a point of order whilst simultaneously shrieking at me. The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Burke: On a point of order: Practice is clear, that when a ruling is given that a member must withdraw, they must withdraw without any qualifiers attached.

The Speaker: I'm very conscious of that and I'm just going to say to the Manager of Opposition Business, the Prime Minister has withdrawn and he didn't have qualifiers. The qualifiers you're referring to in Practice are when there's another set of words added. There are two ways you can withdraw. I've asked the Prime Minister to withdraw, and he has done so. I'm going to remind members on both sides that the rules for this place are very clear: you cannot reflect on members or impute motives in any way, shape or form—we could end question time and I could discuss all the precedents going back many decades, if you'd like to—and that refers to groups of people as well. Otherwise, we'll have a situation like the one we had in the 1970s, when a group were imputed and the initial ruling had been that it had to apply to individual members, and we had a procession of members getting up on the same point of order.

JobMaker

Dr Webster (Mallee) (14:13): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House how the Morrison-McCormack government's JobMaker plan is creating jobs, building infrastructure and boosting the economy as part of the recovery from COVID-19?
Mr McCormack (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (14:13): I do thank the member for Mallee for not just her question but for her continued advocacy for jobs in her rural Victorian electorate. She is a great advocate for regional infrastructure. She knows that local roads and community infrastructure are going to bring benefits, not just for her electorate but for electorates right across the country. These packages are delivering a $1.8 billion benefit to communities across the nation. JobMaker is being bolstered by our $100 billion pipeline of investment over the next decade, making sure that we, through the back of COVID-19, reconnect people with work. Of course, through the JobKeeper program and through other programs, we have engaged businesses to try to remain open as best they could but also to continue to employ people. It’s all about jobs. Our policies are focused on making sure people are in work and making sure that there are jobs available.

In Mallee, we're building the Mildura South Regional Sporting Precinct. It's a $17½ million commitment. The precinct is predicted to attract 200,000 visitations per year. It will involve the construction of a full-sized Australian Rules footy field with a 124-space sealed car park. It is expected that there will be 90 per cent local employment in its construction. I hear that the Richmond Tigers—which I know the education minister will be delighted to hear—are interested in playing a practice match there. The project is progressing ahead of schedule. South Mildura Sporting Club President Mark Bresnehan said:

This is going to provide amazing opportunities … This new precinct is not just about providing a home to the stakeholders directly involved, it's going to have a significant impact on the whole community …

For the South Mildura Football and Netball Club, their footy glory days were in the late sixties. They won the 1968, 1969 and 1970 premierships of the Sunraysia football league. It's a good competition. They're the Bulldogs. We want to put more bite into them and we are doing just that.

But that's not all we're doing. There is a $1.49 million grant for the Horsham Livestock Exchange. That's 15 to 20 jobs in the construction phase with the provision of fixed roofing on the 23,400 square metre yards to provide shelter and shade. I have been there with the member for Mallee. I know how important a project this is. This livestock exchange generates more than $70 million worth of livestock sales annually. They're big projects. They involve jobs and regional development. Mark Radford, Mayor of Horsham Rural City Council, said, 'The Horsham Livestock Exchange project is providing jobs in our community right now and will deliver an industry-standard facility that will be best practice, helping to keep animals and workers safe.' That's what it's all about—creating jobs, creating opportunities and creating work for people in that wonderful seat of Mallee, which is so well represented by the member.

Dr Chalmers (Rankin) (14:16): My question is to the Prime Minister. Under this Prime Minister, Australia has entered its first recession in three decades. Some 835,000 Australians have lost their jobs since March. How many unemployed Australians don't have a job because the Prime Minister deliberately excluded them from JobKeeper?

Mr Frydenberg (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:17): I would say to the member for Rankin, if he rang up the Premier of Queensland, there would be 66,000 more people in a job if she lifted those restrictions. It's more than $600 million a month to the Queensland economy. All he has to do is pick up the phone to that Labor Premier and get her to lift the restrictions. The reality is that we put in place a $70 billion JobKeeper program that is supporting more than three million Australians. We were very clear, at the outset, that we wouldn't be picking up the bill for fully owned foreign companies here in Australia. We said at the time that we wouldn't be picking up the bill for local governments because they were the responsibility of state governments. And we made it very clear that, when it came to long-term casuals, they would be under the JobKeeper program, but, when it came to short-term casuals, we were hoping they would stay in a job and we put in place a $30 billion cash-flow boost to support small businesses, based on the size of the payroll. So I say to the member for Rankin: if the Australian economy was being hit by his $387 billion of higher taxes, you would see fewer people in a job. Under this government, we are dealing with a once-in-a-century pandemic. Under this government, we are working day and night to keep Australians in jobs and businesses in business.

Ms Sharkie (Mayo) (14:18): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management. To meet biosecurity requirements in international markets, SA growers must freight to irradiation facilities in Queensland or Victoria. Added time and cost of interstate freight puts SA at a distinct disadvantage. We need our own facility near the airport. With the number of fruit fly outbreaks in South Australia increasing, access to a local facility will be critical to our industry's ability to expand into new export markets. Given the
importance of diversifying our trading partners for our farmers, what steps could the federal government take to support SA growers to meet biosecurity standards in emerging export markets?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:19): I thank the member for Mayo for her question and her advocacy for her producers in South Australia. She is very passionate. I can assure her that we have already started. The federal government has committed $850 million with respect to biosecurity. The federal government's responsibility is around maintaining our borders and protecting us from those threats to our biosecurity that could cost us significant amounts of money. We'll continue to work through that.

When it comes to fruit fly in South Australia, we’ve started with specific programs. There's over $16 million in a harmonisation program with other states to ensure that the biosecurity protocols between states are adhered to and monitored and, in fact, that farmers on properties work together from one side of the border to the other.

We're also looking to the research and technology—the new jobs; the sexy jobs—within agriculture. We've invested over $2 million into breeding and spreading sterile fruit flies to ensure we reduce the numbers of fruit flies across South Australia and the country. That's the sort of investment that we want to make—real investments in reducing the number of fruit flies and the threat to South Australia in particular. We'll work and continue to work with the South Australian state government in a cooperative and collaborative way in seeing if there are measures that we can take. I appreciate the fact that industry in South Australia are putting their hands in their pockets. It's important that we work together—industry and state and federal governments—in trying to continue to improve our opportunities to export the best food and fibre around the world.

**Employment**

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (14:21): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer remind the House of the Morrison government's strong record in creating jobs? How will the Morrison government's JobMaker plan ensure more jobs are being created as our economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative policies?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:21): I thank the member for Berowra for his question and acknowledge his extensive work in Indigenous health, in mental health and in education. I acknowledge his strong advocacy on those issues.

We entered this economic crisis from a position of economic strength. The coalition has helped create over 1½ million jobs since we came to government. We have seen the participation rate reach a record high. We saw youth unemployment fall. We saw the gender pay gap narrow. When it came to employment growth, in February we had an employment growth rate of three per cent, which was double the OECD average. In February, unemployment was 5.1 per cent, compared to the 5.7 per cent when we came to government. Of course, the economy has been hit by this one-in-a-century pandemic. What we saw today in the unemployment numbers, with the unemployment rate increased to 7.1 per cent, was how 228,000 people lost their jobs over the month of May. These are not just numbers. These are family members, these are friends, these are workmates and these are neighbours. That's the human toll of the coronavirus. That's why this government has responded with a range of income supports but also with the HomeBuilder program, knowing there are around one million people employed in the construction sector. With the extension of the instant asset write-off, recognising that investment creates jobs, and the bringing forward since last November of $7.8 billion of infrastructure programs and the fast tracking of 15 projects, we're helping to create more than 60,000 jobs. While the coalition was putting in place $260 billion of income support and the cash flow boost, doubling the safety net, providing cash payments to households—

Mr Hill interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bruce is warned!

Mr LITTLEPROUD: and, of course, putting in place the JobKeeper program, what was the shadow ERC working on in the great traditions of Hawke and Keating? What was their single signature economic policy that they were working on to help get the economy working and get Australians back into work? What was it? What was the member for Rankin and the member for Grayndler working on? They were working on—wait for it—a national driver's licence as their single economic policy. Even the member for Rankin can't blame the media for that. That is the reality: a national drivers licence. L-plates from economic lightweights.

**Australia Post**

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (14:24): My question is to the Leader of the Opposition under standing order 99, and it relates to the motion standing in his name with respect to the disallowance of the Australia Post regulations. I ask: why is the motion urgent?
Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): I thank the member for Chifley for his question, and it goes to two great passions of the member for Chifley: the passion for job creation and the protection of jobs, particularly for our posties; and the passion for service delivery, particularly for vulnerable Australians. That's why it's urgent that the House deal with the motion to disallow Australia Post regulations. There are two ways that laws can come into effect. One is through legislation. The other is by regulation. The only way that the House and, therefore, the Australian people can have any scrutiny of it is through the disallowable instrument provisions, and that's why it's urgent that standing orders and the provisions of the House of Reps Practice allow for the consideration of a disallowance motion at the first possible opportunity.

These regulations halve the frequency of postal delivery in places like Queanbeyan to just twice a week. It's urgent that delivery times not be allowed to just be blown out from three to seven full days as a result of regulatory changes that haven't been considered by this parliament. That's why it's urgent that, when a disallowance motion is moved, it be considered by the parliament. This isn't some academic exercise; this is about jobs for essential workers. For all the grandmothers and grandfathers out there who put the $5 in the birthday card for their grandkids, it's absolutely critical that letters are able to be delivered at a frequency greater than seven business days.

That is why, on a day when the unemployment rate has hit an effective rate of 11.3 per cent, it's essential that we're actually prepared to take concrete action by considering this disallowance motion as a matter of urgency—so that jobs can be protected, because it is urgent, because Australia Post customers need certainty. What's more, Australia Post workers need certainty. This is about jobs and certainty. It is urgent because the parcels boom that is occurring should mean more jobs, not less jobs, but these regulations that have been put in but not considered by this parliament will result in fewer jobs. There are hundreds of thousands of Australians who could do extra jobs delivering parcels, and that is why it's urgent that this be considered. JobKeeper ends in September, and it's important that it be delivered. (Time expired)

COVID-19: Employment

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister please update the House on what measures the Morrison government is taking to protect Australian jobs by working to avoid a second wave of COVID-19?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:28): I want to thank the member for Moore, who knows that perhaps the most urgent and important issue which not just this parliament but parliaments around the world have faced in the last 30 years has been the response to COVID-19, a disease which has now reached over 8.3 million people, which has taken over 440,000 lives and which is accelerating in its spread around the world. He knows this because in Joondalup Hospital, a hospital for which he, along with the Attorney-General, fought for over $150 million in investment, they have been taking care of the sick and those from the Artania who have lost their lives to COVID-19.

Against that background, Australia went into this crisis with a pandemic plan. It's a plan which has allowed us, despite the great challenges, to achieve a health outcome which is the envy of much of the world. It has meant that we have saved lives, and, in saving lives, we have been able to save jobs, protect jobs and protect livelihoods. What we have faced in Australia, as challenging and agonising as it is, is nothing compared with what we've seen with the health and employment outcomes in other parts of the world.

The quality of the containment process—the border closures; the testing program, with over 1.9 million tests done; the tracing program, now with over 6.35 million people having downloaded the COVIDSafe app; and the work that Australians have done in distancing—has given us the opportunity to plan that road out. And we're embarking on that road out. That has meant we've been able to release some of the most difficult social- and physical-distancing measures and that businesses have been able to open far earlier than anybody had anticipated. That means that people have been able to be employed.

This is raised with me each and every time I have the privilege of speaking with someone from overseas, because they see the human suffering in their countries and they see what has been avoided in Australia because of a plan which was created by the Prime Minister and by the team on the basis of the medical advice, and which was delivered in a way which has meant we're saving lives and protecting lives in Australia. But also, as a consequence of those health outcomes, we have given ourselves the best possible chance of avoiding a second wave and of creating those jobs.

Those jobs are being re-established every single day. But without the health outcomes we would never have been able to do that. So I want to thank our doctors, our nurses and our medical advisers. I want to thank all of the Australians who have done everything to save and protect the lives of others. We have more to do, but we're on that road out and we're saving lives and saving livelihoods. (Time expired)
Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (14:31): My question is to the Prime Minister. Under this Prime Minister, Australia has entered its first recession in three decades. Can the Prime Minister confirm that women and younger workers have been most affected by this recession?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:31): As I noted today with the Treasurer, it is indeed young people who have been most hard-hit. In the most recent May figures, today, I think that around 45 per cent or thereabouts of the falls we've seen in employment have been for younger people, and that 52 per cent of women are affected by those numbers.

The member makes reference to the recession. This recession has been brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. It's the recession we weren't going to have and which we shouldn't have had to have. The last recession we had in this country was described by the Labor Treasurer at the time as 'the recession we had to have'. We should never have to have a recession. That was what the government had worked so hard to do over many years, and the biggest beneficiaries of the job creation that occurred under our government's policies leading into the pandemic were women.

Labour force participation for women had risen to an all-time high and the gender pay gap had fallen to an all-time low. It is true that women have been the most impacted of the two genders when it comes to employment in this country—that is true—and young people also. It is our great hope that as the economy continues to open—and, as I noted at the press conference today, the figures that were released today pre-dated the opening of the economy under the three-step plan agreed to by national cabinet—women and younger people should be the first to benefit, because it is the sectors of retail and hospitality which have been most affected, and they are the areas which we hope would be the most supported as the economy reopens.

This recession is a terrible business for all Australians. It is a recession that we didn't have to have and it was a recession that we weren't going to have. But as a result of the coronavirus epidemic, that is where we find ourselves. But, even in a recession, we find the Australian economy in a better position than almost all, if not every, other developed economy in the world. Now, that is no comfort to those Australians who have lost their jobs. But the truth is that if you're an Australian in Australia then you are in the best place in the world in the midst of this crisis.

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's JobMaker plan will help Australian industry by ensuring that our businesses, especially those in regional areas, have the skilled workforce they need to grow and create new jobs in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery?

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (14:34): I thank the member for his question. We have had many discussions about the businesses in his electorate of Groom—how we can assist them, how we can grow opportunities for them, how we can open up export opportunities for them. In particular, we've had a number of discussions about the Wellcamp Airport precinct, which continues to develop as a very important regional hub that is going to power not only the immediate vicinity but also other parts of Queensland and hopefully many other areas right across Australia. That precinct is on track to house advanced manufacturing, aviation training and support industries associated with that, as well as food processing businesses. All those businesses require a highly skilled workforce.

On this side of the House we are very much aware that for businesses to grow they need a very highly skilled workforce. That's particularly important in our regional communities. That's why a focus on skills is at the heart of this government's JobMaker plans. The economic impacts of the COVID pandemic provide us with an urgency but also a real opportunity to truly reform skills and training in the national interest. Over the past two years the Morrison government has been reinvesting in our skills system and leading the way in reforming our VET sector. This includes funding apprenticeships through the Additional Identified Skills Shortage payment and the Apprentice Wage Subsidy for rural and regional Australia.

In March this year we committed $1.3 billion in wage subsidies to help small businesses affected by COVID-19 to retain their apprentices. It's helping regional communities right around the country, including in Eden-Monaro, where 589 apprentices have been assisted through our COVID-19 Apprentice Wage Subsidy. In fact, the number of apprentices in Eden-Monaro has increased between 2015 and 2019. That shows that locals really understand and are seeing the value in vocational education and training.

Whether it's regional New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory or the ACT, there are no borders when it comes to doing business. That's why consistency
in vocational education and skills training is so important. We are proud to be working in a practical way to help Australian businesses right around the country create well-paid, highly skilled jobs for our future.

**Pensions and Benefits**

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:38): My question is to the Prime Minister. The *Financial Review* reports today:

The Morrison government believes moving people from JobKeeper to JobSeeker beyond the end of September will maximise their employment prospects.

Why is the Prime Minister telling Australians that the best form of a job is welfare?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:38): The article the member refers to does not contain direct quotes from me, so that is an editorial position that has been summarised by the *Financial Review*. I'll simply say this: the purpose of people going onto jobseeker is that you get people back into a job. That what being on unemployment benefits means to the government. In the government we believe that when someone loses a job and they go onto jobseeker the goal of that program, working with the employment services program, is to get people back into work.

It is absolutely the case that as the many months roll on there will be a time when businesses make decisions about how many employees they will be able to carry in the post-COVID economy and through the crisis. And for employees who are not in a position to have ongoing employment with a company we need to get them trained and get them into another job. That is how the system works. That is what the government is working night and day on, to ensure we get the right balance of income supports, job programs, employment services, skills training, cashflow assistance, tax reductions, lower regulation and infrastructure spending to ensure we get people back into work. We are fighting for the jobs of Australians. That's what our government are doing. Each and every day, we are fighting to get Australians back into work. The Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party are just simply fighting with each other.

**Coalition Government**

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Home Affairs. Will the minister outline to the House why the Morrison government's sound and consistent decision-making process is so important to keep Australians safe, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:40): I thank the honourable member for Ryan for his question and thank him also for the great passion he's got for making sure that we can protect Australian children. The work that he's done in his electorate of Ryan really should be commended to the House.

Obviously the government have taken a very deliberate approach over a long period of time now to make sure that we can keep Australians safe. We've cancelled a record number of bikies, outlaw motorcycle gang members, who are the biggest—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr DUTTON: They are the defenders over there of bikies, who are involved with the CFMMEU. I understand the link, but, still—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: It's a reflection on members. I ask that it be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: Yes. I'll just say that is a reflection on members and the minister needs to withdraw.

Mr DUTTON: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I just want the minister to resume his seat for a second now. I said earlier that imputations and reflections on members cannot occur and they need to be withdrawn. I'm now saying, given I've explained it as clearly as I possibly can, that I ask if anyone needs further explanation. If there are further reflections, I'll be taking more action than just the withdrawal. I'll regard it as deliberate defiance.

Mr DUTTON: I should apologise to the CFMMEU as well, Mr Speaker, for any offence that I've caused them, of course! The reality is that we have cancelled record numbers of visas of criminals in our country who have committed offences against Australians. We've done that because we have the judgement to keep Australians safe. And, when you look at the decisions that have been made by those opposite over a long period of time by this Leader of the Opposition, he doesn't have good judgement—that is very clear. It's clear that he doesn't have good judgement. He's opposed for a long time the visa cancellation process that we have in place. He has opposed for the last three years the position that we took consistently to introduce minimum mandatory sentencing for sex offenders, and yet he folded this week at the 11th hour. And he's had shocking judgement when it comes to the important issue of keeping Australians safe by keeping our borders secure. The Leader of the Opposition has
stood against Operation Sovereign Borders and the elements of that policy which have stopped people drowning at sea. He has no judgement at all. We've seen it play out this week as well in relation to the issues that are engulfing the Victorian division of the Labor Party. It continues on and on. His poor judgement is on display every day.

This government has made a decision now to cancel the visas of 249 offenders that have committed rape or sexual assaults, compared to 43 when Labor was in government. We have cancelled 510 visas for perpetrators of child sexual offences and those who have been found to have possessed child sexual exploitation materials. Compare that 510 to 97 during Labor's period in government. We will do whatever we can to keep Australians safe, but you need to make the right decisions. You need to have the good judgement to keep Australians safe, to keep our borders secure and to make sure that you can take care of Australian children. This man is not up to the task. (Time expired)

**Economy**

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (14:44): My question is to the Prime Minister. Under this Prime Minister, Australia has entered its first recession in three decades. How many Australians will lose their jobs? And how many businesses will collapse in September when the Prime Minister snaps back their JobKeeper wage subsidies?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:45): The member's question is presumptuous, because he makes assumptions about government policy on decisions that have not been made. It is wrong of the member to assert decisions of the government that have not been made. What the government is working to do is to ensure we have the right combination of income support, business support, targeted industry assistance measures, tax reductions and other supports that ensure that as few people as possible in this country lose their jobs. And, for those who do—and there will be more who do, because we are in a recession caused by a global pandemic. Those opposite may wish to overlook that fact and seek to score points over a recession, which is what they're doing in this place today, and that is very disappointing—220,000 more people lose their jobs, and the Labor Party come in and seek to make political points over this. The government is going to continue to provide the economic leadership and policy support to ensure that as few people as possible are impacted on the way, but there is a heavy blow which is coming on this economy and the global economy, in all countries, developed, not developed and developing. But what we are doing as a country is outperforming all of those countries, pretty much, and certainly the developed countries of the world, as we've sought to respond to this crisis. Now, we will continue to provide that judgement and that support, and that strong economic leadership.

Ms Swanson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Paterson is warned.

Mr MORRISON: It is the same economic leadership that ensured that, prior to this COVID-19 crisis, we had balanced the budget, and over 1.5 million jobs were created, 58 per cent of those being for women. That was the economic leadership that we'd provided. We have done it before, and the Australian people know they can trust us to do it again.

**COVID-19: JobMaker**

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (14:47): My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government's JobMaker plan includes consideration of employment flexibility to make it easier for businesses to employ more Australians, particularly those who have been hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (14:47): I thank the member, and I know he has a great interest in this area and the people that we can help by potential reforms. Today's unemployment figures obviously show that the task to regrow jobs will be monumental and require enormous effort and new approaches across a whole range of policy areas. We also know, of course, that some sectors have been hit harder than others. The accommodation and food services sector—is our cafes, our restaurants—is ordinarily our sixth-largest industry by employment. That has seen almost a 30 per cent drop in jobs since March. And that sector—food services and accommodation—along with retail, I think, are two of the hardest-hit sectors. They're obviously also very big employers of women and young people in our economy. So in accommodation and food services, over half, about 55 per cent, is female employment, and 47 per cent in that industry sector are young people aged between 15 and 24. When you have this decrease that, as we've discussed today, is felt more immediately by women and by young people, the challenge is: how do we regrow the jobs in those areas as quickly as possible? Those two industry sectors that are presently in enormous distress, that presently have greatest effects for women and young Australians, are also two industry sectors most reliant on the award system and they're also two industry sectors where there are the most complicated awards inside the
system. So there is a challenge that, if we can make those awards simpler, we can actually assist the businesses to grow the jobs to increase young and female participation in those workforces and get us back to where we were, which was the highest female workforce participation and the lowest gender pay gap that Australia has ever seen. Just by way of that complexity, those awards have between them 200 different classifications and more than 3½ thousand potential pay points.

There's an example of a young person working a 14-hour pay period with five different pay rates—not a 14-day period, a 14-hour period. In the hospitality award, a grade 1 food and beverage attendant can wipe tables and pick up glasses from tables, but not take beverages to tables. Taking things to tables must be done by a grade 2. A grade 2 worker can also answer the phone, take reservations and greet and seat guests, but not a grade 1 worker. And they must never wipe a table. A grade 3 worker can supervise a grade 1 staff member that can wipe tables, and they can provide general assistance to food and beverage attendants at a higher classification, but this cannot include service to customers and it must never include service at a snack bar.

You can imagine how it is for the cafe and restaurant owners in all of our electorates dealing with the complexity of that type of award. Through our working group process, if we can decrease that complexity, we can grow jobs, particularly jobs for young Australian men and women.

**JobKeeper Payment**

**Dr CHALMERS** (Rankin) (14:50): My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to reports in today's *The West Australian* that the Treasurer is holding dinners with backbenchers to decide which workers will be kicked off JobKeeper before September. The government excluded millions from JobKeeper from the start and has already kicked off thousands more. Who's next?

**Mr FRYDENBERG** (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:51): All I'd say to the member for Rankin is: don't believe everything you read. That's all I'd say to him. But the member for Rankin—

*Dr Chalmers interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Rankin!  
**Mr FRYDENBERG:** knows all too well that the Australian economy dodged his $387 billion of higher taxes and is now in the midst of a once-in-a-century pandemic. He also knows that the government has committed 13.3 per cent of GDP, at $260 billion, in economic support, including a JobKeeper program that is supporting more than three million workers. He also knows that we have effectively doubled the safety net, with the jobseeker coronavirus supplement. He also knows that we have put in place a $30 billion cashflow boost, based on the size of the payroll of businesses to ensure that they can put that money to their fixed costs but also to their labour costs. He also knows that we put in place an extension of the instant asset write-off for businesses with a turnover of up to $500 million. And they can purchase assets as many times as they want of up to $150,000.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rankin on a point of order?

**Dr CHALMERS:** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. The question was about how many people the government will kick off JobKeeper.

**The SPEAKER:** The question had some preambles and some other aspects to it as well. If the member for Rankin wishes to confine the Treasurer's answer he really ought to confine his question to one question.

**Mr FRYDENBERG:** The member for Rankin knows all too well that there's a comprehensive suite of economic measures that we have put in place, and those are measures that are helping to contribute to the comeback in consumer and business confidence. Consumer confidence has picked up 93 per cent off its lows. Business confidence has picked up 70 per cent off its lows. The ABS weekly payroll jobs data, finishing at the end of May, the 30th, showed payroll jobs worked by females increased by 1.4 per cent through May compared to 0.4 per cent for males.

The member for Rankin knows all too well that we're considering a review of the JobKeeper program. He knows that under the coalition, through the economic support that we put in place, we're helping to keep people in jobs and businesses in business.

**HomeBuilder**

**Mr STEVENS** (Sturt) (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Housing. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is helping Australians into their first home and at the same time supporting jobs in the housing and construction sector?

**Mr SUKKAR** (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (14:54): I thank the member for Sturt for his question. He is a champion for first home buyers, not just in his electorate but throughout South Australia,
and continues the commitment of the Morrison government and, indeed, all coalition governments in helping people get into their first home.

The HomeBuilder program we announced recently has been specifically targeted to support first home buyers get into their first home, with a $25,000 grant for new home purchases and rebuilds of a substantial nature. The evidence is starting to come in that, yes, this has been designed for first home buyers and is overwhelmingly being taken up by first home buyers—a $25,000 grant to help people get into their first home. It was reported by the ABC.

Mr Hill interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will pause. The member for Bruce keeps interjecting. He has already been warned. He will leave under 94(a). It's probably why the whips seated him near the door. The Minister for Housing has the call.

The member for Bruce then left the chamber.

Mr SUKKAR: I'm not sure why helping people get into their first home is something that angers those opposite so much, but it was reported by the ABC the words of Don Crellin who is the managing director of Resolve Finance. He said the following about HomeBuilder:

It is generating a great deal of inquiry. I think it's great, particularly for first homebuyers coming into the market, it's certainly something we haven't seen before and it certainly does give first homebuyers a real kick forward…

Ms Swanson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Paterson has also been warned. The minister will continue.

Mr SUKKAR: I would say to the member for Sturt that, indeed, many of the states and territories around Australia have backed in the HomeBuilder program with their own schemes. So in South Australia, in the member's electorate, somebody will not only get as a first home buyer a $25,000 HomeBuilder grant but they will be able to supplement that with $15,000 from the Marshall state government. So they will receive $40,000 towards their first home. This has led Ian Marcos, from the South Australian Master Builders Association to say: 'The phones have been ringing really madly since the announcement. People have been speaking with their feet.'

This scheme, the HomeBuilder scheme, supporting first home buyers, supporting one million jobs in the residential construction industry, builds on the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, where 10,000 people have been able to buy their first home with a deposit of as little as five per cent and, in a few weeks' time, 10,000 new places will be available. It also builds on the First Home Super Saver Scheme, a way for people to accelerate their savings through superannuation.

The HomeBuilder scheme, First Home Loan Deposit Scheme and First Home Super Scheme have a couple of things in common. Firstly, they help first home buyers get into the market. They support residential construction jobs and every single one of those policies was opposed by the Labor Party.

Vocational Education and Training

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (14:57): My question is to the Prime Minister. On 2 July last year, the government promised 80,000 new apprenticeships, but, even before coronavirus, 140,000 apprenticeships and traineeships had been lost under this seven-year government, and the losses are just getting worse. Why does the Prime Minister want young people to join the unemployment queue rather than learn a trade?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:58): I don't want that to happen.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Member for Sydney.

Mr MORRISON: That's why one of the first things we did when we went into the COVID-19 crisis was increase the support for apprentices with a 50 per cent wage subsidy, so that, if we could help it, we'd not become early victims of this COVID-19 crisis, and we continue to provide that support. We continue to work with the states and territories, to have major changes to the reform of how skills training is conducted in this country. Each year the government puts $1.5 billion to the states and territories to support vocational education and training. That dates back to the agreement that was put in place by the Labor government which said $1.5 billion each year to the states and territories in return for—nothing. There was no accountability. There were no targets. There were no requirements for the states to report or do anything in relation to that money. That needs to change. That's why I'm engaged with the premiers and chief ministers in discussing how we can change those arrangements to better put that $1.5 billion to work.
So we are very committed to changing the way skills are delivered in this country, the appointment of the skills commissioner has been absolutely vital to inform the sort of skills that need to be trained in our workforce, particularly those who are coming out of work at this terrible time and how we can retrain them to be in the jobs that will be there in the post COVID economy. I note that the member raises these issues, but I also note that, when she was a member of the cabinet, the number of apprentices and trainees fell by 110,000 in a single year—2012-13—and over just two years between the 2011-12 budget and the 2013 federal election Labor gutted $1.2 billion from employer incentives to take on apprentices.

I'm sure that actually the opposition and the government agree that we need to get young people back into work and I'm sure we agree that we need to change the way that skills training is funded and delivered in this country. I would hope that, when we're able to bring forward that package of further reforms for skills training, I can look forward to the Labor Party supporting it.

Defence Industry

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (15:00): My question is to the Minister for Defence Industry. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is creating jobs in the defence industry to support our economic recovery as we come out the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Ms PRICE (Durack—Minister for Defence Industry) (15:00): I thank the member for Braddon for his question, acknowledge his 20 years of service in the Australian Army and also acknowledge what a fabulous regional member he is, who understands the needs of those people in Tassie. Thank you for your contribution.

As we fight to get our economy back on track, our government is very focused on securing new jobs in defence industry and defence manufacturing to ensure that we keep the wheels of defence industry moving whilst we focus on economic recovery. We're very proud of our $200 billion investment in defence capability and we have created thousands of jobs already, but we will create thousands more. Already there are 70,000 Australians working in defence industry right across our country. So far we have identified with our $90 billion ambitious shipbuilding program that we will create some 15,000 jobs. With our next-generation army vehicle project we will also create some 1,400 jobs, and many more have been identified. With our joint strike fighter program we've already created some 2,400 jobs and we know there are many more to come.

This morning I had the great pleasure of travelling to Queanbeyan in Eden-Monaro to visit Lintek. Lintek currently has a number of defence manufacturing projects which are protecting our men and women in uniform. Lintek is a fabulous example of manufacturing here in Australia—and I remind everyone that manufacturing is alive and well in Australia and Lintek is a fabulous example of that. Lintek is the only onshore manufacturer of circuit boards for our defence capability. Not only that; they were also involved in manufacturing parts for ventilators when the COVID-19 health crisis was at its worse, and they are incredibly proud of themselves. We also are very proud of Lintek's contribution to that.

Lintek currently has 50 employees. We want them to have more employees, and that's why earlier this year we gave them a grant of $1 million from the Morrison government to help them double their production of their circuit boards. Doubling the production of their circuit boards means more jobs for Queanbeyan and more jobs for Eden-Monaro. We're very proud of Lintek and we're going to back them all the way.

The Morrison government are very focused on supporting Defence jobs and ensuring that we keep the Defence jobs that we've got. That's what we're focused on: jobs. We know what the other mob are focused on: themselves.

Higher Education

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (15:03): My question is again to the Prime Minister. It's reported today that the number of applications for university has doubled this year, but thousands of young people will miss out on a place if the government doesn't scrap its unfair cap on student places. Why does the Prime Minister want young people to join the unemployment queue rather than study to be a nurse, a teacher or an engineer?

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Education) (15:04): We want young Australians to get the skills that they need to be able to get a job, and one of the first things we did when the pandemic hit was put in place, with the higher education sector, short courses. We put those short courses in place in areas where we knew there were going to be skills shortages and in areas where we knew, as we come out of this pandemic, people would be able to get a job—areas like teaching and like counselling, which are very important. One of the great tragedies we saw from the fires over Christmas was that we didn't have enough clinical psychologists to be able to provide the counselling needed. So we put it in those areas—in areas of STEM. What we have seen since Easter Sunday is that 20,000 students—that's what we estimate—have taken up those short courses.
We've also put in, with the university sector, performance based funding, which is growing extra places in the higher education sector. How performance based funding works is that we incentivise the higher education sector to educate people in the areas that we know that they will get a job—

Ms Coker interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Corangamite is warned.

Mr TEHAN: so we get graduate employment outcomes. Everything that we are doing we are doing by consulting with the sector and making sure that places continue to grow, and we continue to have discussions with the sector. We understand that one of the things that happens with unemployment is that you get counter-cyclical demand for higher education places, and we will continue to work with the sector to make sure that young Australians will come out of this COVID-19 pandemic with extra skills in the areas where we know that they will get jobs.

**Australian Natural Disasters**

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (15:06): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management. Will minister outline to the House the support provided by the Morrison-McCormack government to help communities affected by flood, drought and fire to rebuild, recover and build resilience?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (15:06): I thank the member for his question. It's an important question, because I think it gives us as a nation an opportunity to reflect on what we've endured over the last 18 months outside of COVID. We've had an enduring drought—a cancer that has left no state or territory untouched—that spread from Queensland to right across the nation. We had north-west Queensland floods 18 months ago. We had the fires of this summer that our nation had to endure. Many properties have been lost, livelihoods have been damaged and, tragically, lives have also been lost. But the nation has, with conviction and pride, continued to look to the future.

The federal government has been with the drought through our three pillared National Drought Policy. The first pillar—the here and now—is over $440 million in farm household allowance put into farmers' pockets so that they're able to put bread and butter on their families' kitchen tables. Over $500 million in infrastructure will help those farming families not only preserve the jobs in the communities that support them but also create new jobs and build greater resilience in those communities.

We're the first government, under our third pillar, to look to the future. The $5 billion Future Drought Fund looks to build resilience and give our farmers the tools to equip them to face up to future droughts. We went to the North Queensland floods where many farmers lost their livelihoods overnight. $300 million of the $3.3 billion has been put out to support them through restocking and replanting grants, and there is $400,000 to match farmers to replant and restock. There was $119 million in immediate relief payments to be able to put money into their pockets as well.

For the fires of this summer, $2 billion has been set aside to help in the recovery. We estimated $500 million of that would be spent by 30 June. We're now estimating that $1 billion will have gone out of the government's bank account and into the bank accounts of those people that need it most. There was over $240 million in immediate relief as well to make sure we supported those families in their time of need.

In fact, across those three disasters, the Australian taxpayer has stood with those people most affected and put out over $800 million in immediate support and relief to help those families get through the tragedies that they have faced. We've continued to look to the future through the Future Drought Fund and the Bushfire Recovery Fund. It's important that we as a nation reflect on what we've endured and the fact that we've been able to endure it with such courage and conviction, that we look to future, that we can be the greatest nation on earth and that, when those in this country are in an hour of need, each one of us stands with them shoulder to shoulder.

**Pensions and Benefits**

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong) (15:09): My question is to the Prime Minister. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal told the government at least as early as March 2017 that robodebt was illegal. Why did it take until November 2019—that's 986 days—to suspend the scheme and admit to the Australian people it was illegal?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (15:10): Let me thank the member for Maribyrnong for his question. As I've said now at a number of different press conferences, the government moved expeditiously to pause all debt recovery once informed that the scheme was raising debts in an insufficient manner. We then announced that we would be repaying those funds to 373,000 Australians, that those refunds would be flowing to Australians from 1 July and that more information would be provided to those impacted in preparation for that to occur.
COVID-19: Economy

Mrs McINTOSH (Lindsay) (15:10): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is squarely focused on driving Australia's economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic to support jobs and businesses in electorates like my electorate of Lindsay? Is the Prime Minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:11): We received the news today of the employment statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It was another terribly hard and difficult day for Australians all around the country. There have been many such days over the course of 2020. This is, sadly, for many Australians, proving to be one of the most difficult years in their lives ever. For some of them, it takes them back to terrible and awful memories of times from many generations ago. We have worked over these many months and Australians have come together. A terrible blow has befallen Australia because of the coronavirus and, indeed, the bushfires that preceded it and even the floods and, of course, the drought that preceded that. Australians have made great sacrifices. While Australia is in a position none of us would have hoped to have been in at this time, that position has significantly protected Australia from what otherwise might have been the case. Australians look around the world and they see the absolute horror show that has occurred: mass graves filled with the victims of the coronavirus, economies destroyed, deaths that have occurred that haven't even been recorded. Here in this country, there has been a response that I believe Australians can be proud of, and they can be proud of each other.

We have a long road ahead. Today's news is tough, and there are more tough days ahead of us. But I know the government has steered itself to make the difficult and important decisions that are necessary to give Australians the support that they need to get through this crisis and to make our way back. This is a dark hour for Australia, but our government can see the brightness that is ahead. That is why we have seen a return in consumer confidence, a restoration of business confidence, and that is coming because they can see us opening up and they can see the successes that we've been having. They can see the product of their efforts and they can see the plan of a government that knows how to create jobs, knows how to restore budgets and knows how to guarantee the essential services that they will rely on by having pro-growth policies, whether it's in skills, industrial relations, infrastructure, deregulation or lower taxes. That's our plan. They know that's our plan and they can have confidence in that plan, and they can have confidence for their future, even in this dark hour. So I thank Australians for their sacrifice. I thank them for their determination. We will not let them down.

Mr Morrison: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:14): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

BUSINESS

Leave of Absence

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:14): I move:

That leave of absence be given to every member of the House of Representatives from the determination of this sitting of the House to the date of its next sitting.

Question agreed to.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Right of Reply

The SPEAKER (15:15): Yesterday I was asked a question by the member for McMahon about a procedure of the House allowing persons to apply to have a response published in Hansard to comments made about them by a member in the House. There is a procedure known as a citizen's right of reply, which is enabled by resolution of the House. Under the resolution, applicants need to submit their complaint in writing to the Speaker, with relevant details about the comments made about them. I thought it might assist the House if I take a moment or two to clarify that the process which applies in relation to consideration of right-of-reply applications is that of the Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests, rather than the Speaker. If the Speaker is satisfied that the submission meets the requirements of the resolution, the Speaker refers the request to the Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests for consideration. The committee, in turn, may make certain
recommendations to the House for its consideration and decision. The committee has proposed as a guideline that the category of persons from whom applications should be considered is of natural persons, although affirming that each application would be considered on its merits.

For the information of all honourable members, I remind them that there is information about the citizen's right of reply procedure on the website of the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests and on the website of the House of Representatives, and there's an info sheet which goes into some detail about the arrangement. I thought it might assist members if I just outlined this in some detail, so that they can refer back to it in Hansard.

Questions in Writing

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (15:16): Under standing order 105(b), may I request that you write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to seek the reason for the delay in answering questions in writing Nos 153 and 292, the former of which has been on the Notice Paper now for 284 days? May I also request that you write to the Minister for Youth and Sport regarding question in writing No. 281 that has been on the Notice Paper for 136 days, and to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, with respect to question No. 320 that has been on the Notice Paper for 113 days?

The SPEAKER (15:17): I thank the member for Mayo. I will write to those ministers this afternoon, and we've got an efficient operation—I can assure you the letters will be being prepared now.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Tertiary Education

The SPEAKER (15:17): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Sydney, proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

How this Government is locking Australians out of TAFE and university.

I call upon those members who approve of the proposed discussion to rise in their places.

More than the number of members required by the standing orders having risen in their places—

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (15:17): Mr Speaker, you now know why I was so well behaved during question time—I had the MPI.

The SPEAKER: It's all relative.

Ms PLIBERSEK: The first instalment of the Prime Minister's marketing-led recovery was: 'If you have a go, you'll get a go.' He was very fond of saying that. Well, what about 17-year-old apprentice Lachlan Beale from Ipswich who has lost his apprenticeship? He lost his job, and has consequently lost his apprenticeship. He says: I'm currently looking for another apprenticeship, but it's just really hard right now. No one's really employing—everyone's scared. … I don't want to be too far between jobs—people look at you funny, wondering why you haven't got a job yet.

Lachlan has been having a go. He's been having a go in his first apprenticeship, and he's been having a go, going from employer to employer begging for an apprenticeship, but he's not getting a job. This government is unique. They used to say, 'We want people to go from welfare to work,' but they have been taking people from work to welfare, with 835,000 jobs lost since March.

What about the prospective TAFE students who are wanting to educate themselves? They know that times are tough at the moment. They see that there aren't many job opportunities. They're knocking on the door of TAFE—courses are closing and campuses are closing, with $3 billion taken out of TAFE and training and another $1 billion underspent. What about those year 12 students who have struggled so hard this year? They have been studying their hearts out and, with the disruption to their face-to-face education, their teachers, their parents and their school communities have been working to keep them learning during the school shutdown period.

What about them? They're having a go, but they're not going to get a go. We learnt today that the number of students who are applying to go to university next year has doubled. It's twice what it was last year. Those kids are not dumb. They've worked out that it's pretty hard to get a job and they're thinking, 'I'm going to go and educate myself so I've got a better chance of getting a job down the track.' As a mother, I've watched my own daughter. I know what year 12 is like. I've got another couple who'll do it in years to come. They've been having a go, but they're not getting a go from this government, because, no matter how hard they work, the numbers allowed to go to university are capped by those opposite. All these people are having a go, but they're not getting a go from the Prime Minister. They should be learning or earning, but, instead, the Prime Minister's sending them from work to welfare.

Since coming to office, those opposite have presided over an economy that has lost 140,000 apprentices and trainees. And do you know what? It's just getting worse. Those numbers have sped up—of course they've sped up—during the current crisis. We are currently losing 2,000 apprentices and trainees every week. This week,
while we've been sitting here and those opposite have been attacking us for whatever comes to mind, 2,000 apprentices and trainees have lost their opportunity of getting a better job, a better future. Meanwhile, those opposite have done nothing to solve that. An extra 100,000 apprentices and trainees will be lost this year. If the Prime Minister doesn't do something, we're going to have 100,000 Lachlans. The Prime Minister likes to pretend that he's some sort of honorary tradie. He's like Scott Cam's apprentice on The Block. But, when it comes to actually doing something to support trades and support apprentices, our future tradies, he's not prepared to lift a finger.

When it comes to our recovery, TAFE and training are going to be absolutely vital. We know that the economy has been hit for six. We went into this crisis weak. We had high debt. We had high unemployment, high underemployment, low consumer confidence, low business confidence and low productivity growth. All the numbers were wrong before we went into this crisis, and they've only got worse. TAFE and training are going to be an absolutely critical part of our recovery, because we know that if we have fewer qualified graduates, if we have falling standards and if we have more people dropping out, as has happened with the funding cuts that those opposite have presided over, we will be in a weaker position when the economy begins to recover.

Before this crisis, three-quarters of employers said they couldn't find the skilled staff they needed. They would tell me that. The employers whom I talked to when I was visiting businesses would say, 'We'd love to expand, but we don't have the skilled staff that we need to do that.' How did those opposite deal with that? We saw occupations that stayed on the skill shortages list for years. Three-quarters of employers said they couldn't find the skilled staff they needed. Did those opposite address that by investing more in TAFE and training? No, they did not. They dealt with it by having the highest number of temporary visa holders in Australian history to fill those skill shortages here.

But what does Australia do now that our borders are closed? We've underinvested in skills and training. We've seen 140,000 fewer apprentices and trainees. We're losing them at a rate of 2,000 a week. We've cut funding to TAFE and training. Of the money that was set aside, $3 billion has been cut and $1 billion is underspent. What do we do now? Those opposite must understand that this is the time to invest. Instead of seeing those young people sitting on unemployment queues, why wouldn't we give them skills and education so they can support themselves and contribute to our economy in the future? Now is the ideal time to be expanding, not cutting, the number of apprentices and trainees.

What about university? If those opposite were really to reflect on this, they would see that now is the ideal time to allow more young Australians the opportunity of going to university. But, with the ideological war that's going on, those opposite really like to pretend that university is this scary place; it's full of cultural Marxists being taught feminist theory and how to bring down Western civilisation! But, I'll tell you what, Mr Deputy Speaker, it didn't stop them. There are 23 Liberal cabinet ministers and they all have degrees. In fact, they've got 51 degrees between them. It didn't stop them. It was good enough for them to go to university, but it's not good enough for the people they represent. It's not good enough for the kids in the suburbs that they represent. They're saying to the parents of Australia, 'It was good enough for me, but don't worry about it for your kids.'

My brothers and I were the first in our family ever to go to university—the first generation ever. We have a lawyer and a geologist and I studied journalism—it's a dying trade! But my parents would never have been able to afford to send three kids to university under the plans of those opposite. Soon we will see, once again, those opposite trotting out $100,000 university degrees—user-pays degrees. They are intent on locking young people out of the opportunity of an education, out of the opportunity to be a nurse, to be a teacher, to be a scientist, to be an IT professional or to be an engineer. Why? The jobs aren't there for these young people. The young people know it, and that's why they're applying in record numbers to go to university—and those opposite have capped the places and said: 'There's no place for you here. It was good enough for me, but you don't deserve it.' That's what they're saying to those poor kids who are in year 12 this year and have had their education disrupted. What they're saying as well to the parents of those kids is: 'It was good enough for me, but I'm not going to help your kids. It doesn't matter how much you've sacrificed, I'm not going to help your kids.'

For the rest of us, university was not a debating society. It was actually the key to getting a better chance at a decent quality of life—a better chance of putting a roof over our heads, putting food on the table and raising our families in dignity. This is not a competition between TAFE and university; both are important. We want those opposite to fund both properly. We want both to be properly funded, and, at the moment, neither is properly funded. Those opposite used to say 'have a go and you'll get a go', but at the moment if you have a go what you get from those opposite is a kick in the teeth.

Mr PIT T (Hinkler—Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia) (15:27): I acknowledge some of the comments that were made by the member for Sydney, a number of which I actually agree with. But one was a little bit incorrect: there is, as far as I'm aware, one person in the cabinet with a trade. The reason I know that is
that it's me! And I've had a little look at those opposite, and, unfortunately, the great Labor Party of Australia has not a lot of tradespeople left on its side. I acknowledge that there are some with other experience, including lawyers. And I do acknowledge my opposite number, the member for Hunter, who did do an auto-electrician trade first and then did a grad cert through the University of Newcastle—that's my understanding. I think there's a bootmaker as well. So there are a couple over there who have been through the VET system and have had a go; there's no doubt about that.

But we're talking about opportunity, and I, like many others on this side of this place, do want more opportunities for our youth. We genuinely do. It's difficult (a) to find a position and (b) to complete a trade. Having done one, and a degree, that can be very challenging. I have made lots of mistakes in my life, but I have to say that one of the largest was probably saving my money and then spending it on my HECS debt at the time I was at uni. I really wish I had invested it in something else. But, unfortunately, I didn't have a degree in economics—it was in engineering.

There are opportunities out there. I continue to talk to the resources sector in particular about what they can do for Australia's youth. I will continue to encourage them and to knock on their doors to see how many more people they can provide an opportunity to. And I do want to recognise in particular what the resources sector does for Indigenous communities in terms of employment and training, because they are substantially committed and they do provide significant funding. If you look at the Adani project, more than 20 per cent of their current employees, according to media reports, are from Indigenous communities. I think both sides of the House would agree that is a good thing. That is absolutely a good thing.

The other mention was of an ideological war. What a day to bring that up. What a week to bring that up. I've never seen a bigger text war than what is happening in Victoria at the moment. That point aside, it's not often you get a chance now to put forward the propositions in your local electorate. I do want to take a short period of time to talk about what it is this government is doing for the people that I represent, particularly around training and opportunities.

If we look at the Central Queensland University through the Hinkler Regional Deal, $5 million is being invested by the Commonwealth into an ag-tech hub run by CQ University. Why is that important? Quite simply, it is one of the largest producers of agricultural products in my area, whether that is horticulture, sugar or any other type. I think, as we move into the future and as we look to build a $100 billion agricultural economy in Australia, moving up from the $60-odd billion we produce now, we will need those high levels of skills, particularly in the ag sector. The $5 million hub at the Central Queensland University is incredibly important for work in ag tech. They are a recognised leader in this research space. They will continue to provide the opportunities.

Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, I know you know this because you were intimately involved in the delivery of an additional $30 million over four years to increase the number of bachelor students at the Fraser Coast and Caboolture campuses of the University of the Sunshine Coast. That was necessary. They received those additional 150 places at the Fraser Coast in 2019, increasing to 210 from 2020 ongoing. USC will also get an additional 468 bachelor places at Caboolture, from 2019 ongoing. That was a win. It was a great win for our local community.

Lastly, I want to come back locally to apprentices. The honourable member for Sydney makes some good points around apprentices. Apprentices are a great opportunity—they really are. They are no longer those positions where you cannot compete with somebody with a university education. You can earn significantly good money if you complete an apprenticeship and if you are out there working in industry, particularly in the resources sector. We are supporting local apprentices through the small business and group training organisations when we are saying that eligible employers can apply for a wage subsidy of up to 50 per cent of apprentices' or trainees' wages paid during the nine months from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2020. That is about keeping apprentices engaged with their employment. We must keep them engaged with their employment. What we don't want them to do is lose hope. For the Lachlans out there, I will very publicly state to each one: 'Do not lose hope; there will be opportunity. Continue to try. Continue to work. Continue to have a go. Quite simply, this is the country where you can do whatever you set your mind to—you absolutely can.'

The honourable member pointed out issues around those in grade 12. I'm the same. My daughter is in grade 12. I have a son at university. It has been a very challenging year. I acknowledge that, but we also acknowledge there is a coronavirus pandemic in this country, which we have addressed in terms of the health response. We are now addressing the economic response. This is a challenging time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, without indicating your age, I'm confident that you were around in the recession that Paul Keating determined we had to have. I'm sure you remember how difficult it was at that time. I was on the tools when that happened, and I very clearly remember how tough it was to find a job. We find ourselves in similar
circumstances. But, once again, those opposite are out running a scare campaign. There is no letterbox that the Labor Party will not jump into with a scare campaign, regardless of what it's on.

We have continued to provide money for TAFE. We do not directly fund TAFE. TAFEs are administered by the states and territories. We provide $1.5 billion every year to run vocational education and training, including TAFEs. There have been no cuts to this funding—none. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know you know this and I know those opposite are aware of it too: the state governments are not always great at managing money provided by the Commonwealth. They simply are not. We give $1⅓ billion through TAFEs. Those opposite ripped $1.2 billion out of apprenticeship incentives. They oversaw the biggest fall of apprentices in history.

I will say it again: I am very supportive of providing more opportunities for our youth. I will continue to work with the resources sector, where I think there are opportunities for employment. I know there are a number of companies out there who have already increased their employment. In fact, it's up some 3,000 employees in the three months to the end of March. That is good news in what has been a very, very difficult position.

Regarding universities, we need to ensure our universities are turning out people with the skills that the country needs. We need engineers, whether that is civil or mining or electrical, whether it is mechanical, whether it is sciences. We are funding universities at a record level. The Commonwealth's expenditure is estimated to be more than $18 billion in 2020, increasing to $19 billion in 2023. What we know and what we've seen in terms of the education system is that record funding is not equating to record outcomes. It is not. Throwing more money at this issue has not resulted in huge improvements in the standard. We need ensure that it is addressed on both sides—both the funding level and the quality of what is provided. We need to target what it is this nation needs moving forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien—I know that you know this, being a regional MP—in the regions it is about what we can grow, what we can mine and what we can make, and we will remain committed to delivery on those issues, because, quite simply, they are about jobs and they are about driving our regional economy. With performance based funding in the education sector, Australian taxpayers expect that their taxpayer-funded public uni's will deliver quality higher education. What is wrong with that? There is absolutely nothing wrong with the taxpayer having high expectations. The performance based funding will ensure that growth occurs when quality is demonstrated.

But, to return briefly to my local electorate, I really want to say to all of those businesses out there that are doing it tough right now: hang in there. We know that they are resilient and we know that they can recover, and the country will need them to do just that. Because it is business that employs. It is business that provides opportunities for apprentices. It is business that makes decisions based on confidence, and that confidence comes not only from the people on this side of the parliament but also from those on that side. There are times in this country's history where we need to be working together for an outcome that our nation needs, and one of those times is now. This is a situation we have not found ourselves in for more than 100 years. So, once again, it is a challenging position. We will continue to support industries that are out there delivering for our economy, particularly those that are creating jobs. We will continue to be the job-making government, and I will continue to work with those opposite, because it is necessary. This government is focused. We will continue to provide the funding that is necessary for jobs and training in TAFE and universities.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (15:37): At no point in that contribution did the minister explain why there are 140,000 fewer apprentices and trainees in this country. After seven years, on average there are 20,000 fewer apprentices for each year this government has been on that side of the chamber. As we know, the education sector has been hit and the economy has been savaged by the pandemic. We understand that. And, of course, we've sought to work with the government to work out ways to best mitigate the impact, and we have done that.

But we also have an obligation to make sure that we raise concerns about deficiencies in government responses to social and economic challenges the country confronts. That's absolutely vital, and it was vital back in March when we insisted the government consider a wage subsidy for workers who were going to be unemployed. The government and the Prime Minister responded by saying they were going to rely solely on the jobseeker payment—that is, increasing Newstart as a form of welfare and not having a wage subsidy package for workers in this country. They returned to their electorates and saw unemployment queues they'd never seen before at each Centrelink office. They came back, I'm glad to say, and we welcomed their change of heart and mind. They listened to Labor and others and they introduced the JobKeeper package. But what we've made clear all along is that the JobKeeper package has to provide support for the sectors of the economy that have been hit hardest.

The paradox we have before us is that the government has not sufficiently supported sectors of the economy that have been forced to close down for legitimate health reasons. In many instances, those sectors have a high proportion of workers who are ineligible for JobKeeper. Look at food and accommodation, where there's been a
Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (15:42): What can one say about this matter of public importance except it's the same old Labor, same old tired talking points and same old hypocrisy. We, on this side of the House, can remember the salad days of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd years, when Labor ripped $1.2 billion out of apprenticeship incentives, oversaw the biggest fall in apprenticeship numbers in history and allowed thousands of vulnerable students to be saddled with debts for shonky VET FEE-HELP loans. We, on this side of the House, remember those days and the people of Australia remember them as well. They haven't forgotten.

We remember when their woeful policies plundered billions of taxpayers' dollars out of the skills and higher education sectors. We remember it. And today they have the audacity to come into this House and lecture us on VET and higher education? They left behind a generation of young Australians. Their record on this is absolutely woeful. In fact, under this government there have been no cuts to the VET sector. We know that TAFEs are administered by the states and territories. In fact, the coalition has ensured that the Commonwealth funding to states and territories has been steadily increasing—from $1.36 billion in 2011-12 to an expected $1.61 billion in 2022-23. We're also investing over $585 million over the forward estimates in response to the expert review into the vocational education and training system—that's $525 million for the Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow package and $60 million to expand the Australian Apprentice Wage Subsidy trial.

Now, as I said, the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government was an absolute disaster. As the member for Hinkler knows, they made no less than nine cuts to employer incentives to apprentices.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr GEE: The truth does hurt over there. The truth does hurt. They gutted, as I said, a whopping $1.2 billion out of the system—a shameful record if ever there was one. And, as I said, their woeful reforms to the VET FEE-HELP system saw thousands of vulnerable students exploited by unscrupulous operators. That's their record, yet they have the hide to come into this place and lecture us on higher education! Ninety-one thousand students have had VET FEE-HELP loan debts re-credited by the Commonwealth to the tune of $1.5 billion. What a shameful record that is. However, all is not lost because the coalition is here to help.

An honourable member interjecting—
Mr GEE: We are here to help. In higher education, especially in country Australia, we have invested more than $600 million in additional new initiatives since 2016. Listen to this. I think you're going to like it. I think you're going to learn a lot too. Just recently, on 1 June, I was delighted to announce, with the Minister for Education, nine new regional universities centres. We love those in the country.

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr GEE: What are they? What are regional universities centres? They are facilities where students can come in—it doesn't matter what uni they're from. There's a quiet place to study. They can get some advice, and they can get their university qualifications from a regional centre. We love them in the bush. I'll tell you what, here are the new ones. I'm sure the member for Hinkler would be very interested to know.

Mr Pitt interjecting—

Mr GEE: No, I don't think you have! That's not to worry. A lot of our colleagues in the bush have them.

Mr Pitt interjecting—

Mr GEE: Yes, if you go to the Country Universities Centre in Maranoa, in Roma; or the Country Universities Centre in Macleay Valley in Kempsey. That's in the member for Cowper's electorate. They've got the Slim Dusty Centre in Kempsey and now they are going to have the Country Universities Centre as well. That's a great win for them. There's also the Country Universities Centre in Balonne, in both Saint George and Dirranbandi; the Country Universities Centre in Parks, in the member for Riverina's electorate— (Time expired)

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (15:48): Just to remind those opposite, the MPI is actually about funding for TAFE and universities. I wanted to go to the core of this because I think the Labor Party has always understood that education is the great transformational policy. It's not something that we take for granted with privilege. The Labor Party has always seen, right back in the 1890s, education as the great opportunity for working people to transform their lives and achieve higher salaries, higher wages and greater opportunities in life.

The member for Grayndler and the member for Sydney, who instigated this MPI, have always spoken very passionately about how education has changed their lives, and you could say the same for my life. I'm also the first in my family to finish university. I've got brothers and sisters who are electricians and butchers. They went down the trade road. But, luckily, I was able to go to university and become a teacher and then a lawyer.

Let's have a look at the Prime Minister. I think the Prime Minister, coming from a life of privilege in Bronte—he's a child actor who took his role acting so seriously, in fact, that when he had to play the tradie's apprentice to Scott Cam he really took on that role seriously. In fact, he was so passionate about his role of appealing to tradies that he was even prepared to switch rugby league teams!

As anyone knows, if you're so committed to your character acting that you can switch rugby league teams, that says something about you and your ability to act. There's no doubting this Prime Minister's ability to act. When he switched from the Roosters, the Easts, to Cronulla, he then said, 'I'm going to play a role so convincingly that I'll put on a cap and pretend that I follow the Cronulla Sharks.' That was the commitment he had.

We see what they do. We know that they've cut $2.2 billion from universities and we know that there are 140,000 fewer apprentices and trainees since they came into office. What they do is cut money from trades and universities and cut opportunities for Australians. And, obviously, if your whole life has been as a political staffer and then working in advertising, through an inside route, you know you can't do that. Australians do not like the idea that the government is going to cut money from universities and take opportunities away from apprentices. So what do you do? You reach for the marketing handbook and appoint Scott Cam, and give him $345,000 as a careers ambassador. I should say that Scott Cam is very well respected, and all power to him in terms of the work that he is doing in careers, but it indicates what the Prime Minister is about. He does a flashy news conference, standing beside Scott Cam, as the member for Sydney said, where he pretends to be Scott Cam's apprentice, but it's just a veneer. It's camouflage—'Camouflage'. He lays it across the top as if to say: 'This is what we're doing. We care about careers. We care about skills.' But don't look at what he says; look at what he does. You see it in aged care, you see it in education and you see it in so many areas where they overpromise and completely underdeliver. That's the problem with this government.

They say that the most powerful element in advertising is the truth, and I think Australians are starting to work out that this Prime Minister and so many in his cabinet are all about saying one thing but actually delivering something else. For seven years, they've said, 'We're going to match Gonski.' I remember the ads in the 2013 election. We saw the billboards and the flyers saying, 'We're going to match skills based education.' Then comes a little legerdemain, sleight of hand and suddenly needs based education is out the door. Funding goes down, and there are a completely different set of arrangements. They pretend to care about students, but, instead, they're going to deny more and more Australians an opportunity. There are 140,000 fewer apprentices and trainees, and
we see unemployment over 11 per cent, underemployment at 20.2 per cent and 835,000 Australians missing out. It is a disaster.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (15:53): I rise to talk about this MPI because it is a very important matter. I want to pose this question: what does the Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia have in common with the member for Nicholls, the member for Swan, the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians—who is also the Minister for Sport and Youth—the member for Fairfax and me? We've all done trades. How many of those opposite have a trade? One or maybe two? The Labor Party used to be the party for the worker. Now they are all university educated and/or are union activists, so they are a very, very far cry from the Labor Party of days gone by. And it's really sad to sit here and listen to them talk about things. Those opposite believe that, if you say an untruth long enough and often enough, it becomes a fact, and that's very sad.

We all know that the Commonwealth government is not responsible for funding TAFE colleges. That is the purview of the states and territories. If you have a problem with the funding of TAFE colleges, talk to your state governments. But, notwithstanding the fact that TAFE colleges are fully administered by states and territories, the federal government does provide some $1.5 billion in funding every year to help with vocational education and training, which includes TAFEs.

I was TAFE educated; I went to the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE at Chadstone in Victoria. In the Higgins electorate, there is a great TAFE college. I'm a big believer in TAFE colleges. They do a great job, as did mine when I did my training. But there is a real problem with funding when it comes to TAFE, and that is that there is no accountability for the $1.5 billion that the federal government gives to the states. That's something that the Prime Minister alluded to in his recent speech to the Press Club the other day. There needs to be a shift in how we fund the vocational education and training sector.

Those opposite keep talking about cuts. For all of that talk, I want to say to those listening to this that there have been no cuts to TAFE by the federal government. There have been no cuts to universities by the federal government. I want to talk about university funding. University funding is at a record high. Commonwealth government expenditure, estimated to be more than $18 billion in 2020, will be increasing to $19 billion in 2023. The Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia has got an engineering degree; I've only got a law degree. Is that an increase or a decrease?

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr WALLACE: I am; I've got both. I'm lucky; I did both. Just like the minister for water—

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): Order! Members on my left. As much as the member for Fisher is being a little bit antagonistic, directing his comments directly to you, I would ask that you don't interject as much, and, Member for Fisher, if you could address the chair with your comments, that'd be good.

Mr WALLACE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Chair. I address you directly when I say that those opposite talk about cuts to the university sector and the TAFE sector, and they are simply not correct. They believe that if they keep saying it often enough and long enough it will become fact, but that does not make it so. They often talk about the decrease in apprentices. When they were last in government, they oversaw the loss of 110,000 apprentices in just 12 months. No-one takes any joy in that whatsoever.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (15:58): The member for Fisher, who appears to have caught some aspiration in a street somewhere after he left Holmesglen TAFE, went on to become a lawyer, but he wants to lecture us in this place where I stand as the member for Lalor, a proud person who gave 27 years of her life to education in my local community. I spent 27 years working with the young people whom you are now ignoring. This government is responsible for the demise of aspiration in the suburbs. They are deadening aspiration every day.

I was pleased for several reasons to be asked to join the MPI today. First, they can't gag me here. Let's face it, we've had a day of being gagged, and the MPI is our only salvation. Second, I thought the third Minister for Education since I joined this place might join us for this matter of public importance focused on young people, aspiration and what this government might choose to deliver if they truly believe that what this country needs now is for us all to work together. Let's not forget that when we began on the road through this health crisis, we were all going to be in this together. Do you remember? 'We're all in this together'—we've heard it ad nauseam. What we heard today is the saddest thing I've heard in 30 years. We talk a lot in this place about recessions, technical recessions and projected recessions. Today we heard that 16.1 per cent of our eligible young people are unemployed. That is a moment, really, for this place to take stock. We said we were all in this together, but 16.1 per cent of our young people are not in this together. This government is leaving this afternoon having not delivered a plan for how those 16 per cent of young people are going to spend their days.
The Prime Minister said lots of things in question time. He was sad, but he didn't come up with a plan. We've now listened to three speakers from those opposite on the MPI. Not one of them mentioned a plan. The Minister for Education told us that he was very pleased that there'd been short courses introduced. He just forgot to mention today that they weren't funded. I know that what the young people I represent got today at that dispatch box was, 'Don't give up; keep trying.' While those opposite, who are here to represent electorates across the country, are going home this afternoon, kids in my electorate are going to be hearing: 'Just keep trying. Just keep trying. It's okay. We haven't got a plan for you.' I expected this week in this place a commitment to TAFE. I expected the Victorian state government to be supported to provide their free TAFE. I expected young people to actually be watching the news tonight and thinking, 'There is some hope.' But that's not what we've got.

What we've got is a government who don't care who are getting on planes tonight. 'Keep trying. Keep trying. Don’t give up hope.' Do some research on what happens to people when they get disconnected from work. Let's be brutally honest while you haven't got a plan, while there is no plan in front of this parliament. They could be looking at up to five years of unemployment. That's what they're looking down the barrel at. Parents tonight are ringing young people and saying, 'We've heard the headline figures today on unemployment; how's your job going?' My son rang me today while I was in this place. I left a meeting to take a call from him, thinking: 'Oh, god; today's the day he's lost his job. It's finished.' He's been fortunate. He's worked every day up until now. I thought that call was to say he'd lost his job. It wasn't; it was to say he had been through an EBA meeting and he actually had some hope. I was thrilled that he's working for a company that are concerned about him. If he had lost his job today, do you know what my words to him would have been? 'Let's get you into a TAFE course, mate. What's next?' This government hasn't got a plan for my son or anybody else's son or daughter who got that news today. They're going to be sitting on their backsides or going to jobactive instead of retraining immediately. (Time expired)

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (16:03): Like many in this chamber and most of those sitting here at the moment, I am passionate about education. Like the member for Lalor, I spent more than two decades in education before coming into this place. I am passionate about it. I recognise the passion on the opposite side. I recognise the passion on this side. I have found it dispiriting over the last 12 months that we get fixated on skirmishes over small issues. I want us to actually go back to the basics. We all believe that education is important. We all believe that education serves both an individual and a national purpose. Individually, it gives us an opportunity—an opportunity to learn, to get wisdom, to get skills, to develop expertise. That is good for us as individuals because it builds our own sense of self-worth. It also gives us opportunity to participate in the community in the paid workforce or in the unpaid workforce, whatever we might want to do. Education is powerful. Those on the other side express this regularly, and I agree with them wholeheartedly. Education is powerful for the individual.

Education is also extremely important for our country. We need a knowledgeable country. We need people in our country who have skills, who have knowledge, who are innovative, who can develop things, who can build things and who can sell our ideas to the outside world. Our country needs education, and we as individuals need education, yet all too often in this place, where the majority of us are very highly educated, we forget that point. We argue at the margins and we dispute things. We focus on issues that don't really matter. We should be coming together—yes, call me Pollyanna if you like—and going back to those basic principles, saying, 'What do we agree on?' We want education that is accessible for people. I think we all agree with that. We want education and training opportunities in this country which are excellent. I think we can all agree with that. We want education and training that actually benefit the individual and benefit the nation. Again, I think we can all agree on that. We will disagree, undoubtedly, on how to achieve those goals. That is where we must argue, but let's always start back at that point, where we actually have a shared understanding, a shared hope and a shared expectation about what education should be doing. All too often in this place we resort to suggesting that the other side doesn't want that. I don't think that takes the argument anywhere; I think it takes us backwards.

What is this government delivering to education for students? In the last two decades I have been focused on education for students—with students at the heart of that. It's not just about the money that you put into education or training; we want to make sure that the money is properly spent, both for the individual students and for the country. The Gillard government introduced 'demand driven' and also mechanisms for judging student experience. Our government has increased those mechanisms: the quality indicators for learning and teaching, for example. This is publicly accessible data so that students can see how other students have fared as a result of their education. We are also introducing—and it's not something that the universities necessarily want but it is something that is in the best interests of students—performance-based funding, which will be measured on graduate outcomes and on graduate satisfaction. These are actually important, and help to drive behaviour.

As I said, our combined passion for education is about individuals. We need to come together to look at ways to achieve that, and to make sure that our young people and our not-so-young people have access to an excellent...
education. Performance-based funding and a number of other initiatives which are being announced go towards that. Let's work together.

**Dr ALY (Cowan) (16:08):** It's actually quite a pleasure to follow the member for Curtin, given her contribution where she spoke so passionately about the transformative power of education, and I recognise the member for Curtin's contributions to education in Western Australia over the past two decades. I also admire her call for bipartisanship towards better outcomes in our education system.

I'm not for one minute suggesting that the other side don't want that. I don't think we have to tell the members opposite here about the value of education, because many of them have benefited from a university education and from vocational education and training. But it takes a special kind of someone to use the system, take the opportunities that are given to them, and then turn around and whack the door closed to anyone else wanting to do the same. But that's what this government has done. I'm not saying this lightly, and I'm not saying this as a cheap shot at the government, either. I'm saying this as somebody who has also spent the last two decades in both the vocational education and training system and the university sector, as a junior and then as a senior academic, as a teacher and as a researcher.

I know what the cuts to TAFE and the cuts to universities have meant, not just for the sector but also for students. I am a product of a university education. I didn't go to any of the Group of Eight; I went to a small university that catered specifically for disadvantaged students, for women wanting to re-enter the workforce and for students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. And I'm proud to be the first graduate of Edith Cowan University to stand in this place.

This government hasn't just left young people out in the cold—those who want to go on and get a university education. They've actually shut the gate, locked the door and barricaded the windows for young people. Since the election of this government in 2013 universities and students have been under constant attack, and I want to go through a number of those instances. The 2017 MYEFO decision to cut $2.2 billion from universities, re-capped undergraduate places and their changes to the Higher Education Loan Program was one instance. We've got 200,000 students who are going to miss out on the opportunity of a university place over the decade because of the government's insistence on capping university places. That's 200,000 missed opportunities. That's 200,000 potential scientists, 200,000 potential creative artists, 200,000 potential teachers, nurses, doctors and lawyers, and maybe even the next Prime Minister of Australia—maybe.

We know that if the Liberals had their way we would already be seeing $100,000 university degrees in this country. I also want to remind the House about the government's talk of charging for the university pathways program. I remember that quite distinctly. I remember standing in this House and talking about that program. That six-month pathway program doesn't even yield a qualification. But this government wanted to charge students $3,000. I know students who are in that program. I've referred students to that program, as I'm sure the member for Lalor has. We know the kids who use that program, don't we? We know the kids who do the six-month program with the hope of getting into university and getting a university degree.

Who are the kids, who are the young people—who are the people—who are going to be affected by this? They're young people in rural and regional areas, women seeking to re-enter the workforce and disadvantaged young people. These cuts hit the most vulnerable, those who are the most aspirational and those we should be lifting up. We should be lifting up these young people. *(Time expired)*

**Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (16:13):** I stand with pride about the fact that the Morrison government is going to lead us out of this COVID crisis. We have all faced an incredible health crisis here in this country, and Australians look to a government to lead us out of this crisis. I have to say, it's very clear that, going forward, this country needs to be clear about our direction—and that is to create more jobs. I've been in the university sector myself for many years. I've been a professor at the University of Melbourne and a professor at the University of Manchester. And I note that we have here in this House the member for Curtin, who has been a vice-chancellor at a university in Western Australia. So, both the member for Curtin and I are very passionate about the university sector. We're also very passionate about the opportunity for reform that this COVID crisis offers us.

We know, as we go into the 21st century, that jobs are changing. We know that the employed skilled workforce is changing, and we need to bring the economy with us. We need to bring the skilled workforce that is going to be prepared for the opportunities that a post-COVID crisis offers us. At the turn of the 21st century, there was a great flourishing of the internet. There was a great flourishing of the digital platforms that we all now take for granted in our daily lives, and it has delivered us the most extraordinary amount of inventiveness. But so too has our education system changed quite dramatically, and so too do we need to prepare the next generation for the future that they are going to see. It is so important that we reform our university and TAFE system in preparation for this. We've heard this afternoon about some of those reforms that are already commencing. And I welcome the
fact that the Prime Minister is putting jobs at the heart of our future, underpinned by skills and training, and underpinned by understanding that universities and TAFEs are counter-cyclical to the economy.

We know that we are facing a recession—we know we've already entered into a recession. Now is the time to offer the opportunities for our young people to have the jobs of the future, and that is why I endorse the new recommendations that the Minister for Education, Dan Tehan, is making—that is, to focus the minds of our young people on what jobs there are on the other side of that training. They have to understand that it isn't the world of the 20th century, where you could go to university and one day come out the other side and think about what job you might get. We need our young to understand that the jobs of the future are in the healthcare sector, in the IT sector and in the services industries. We need to have these young people ready to grasp those opportunities. No longer is it about them going to university—like in The Game of Life—and hoping that means they will come out the other side with a job. They need to go in with a forward-thinking idea, and for it to be supported by career advice and supported by what opportunities are on the other side. We don't want them blindly going in—as we know from the university sector, many of them go into their first year and change courses, because they haven't had good career counselling, they haven't had good skills mapping and they don't understand what it is they're going to get on the other side. So I welcome the fact that our government is supporting a National Careers Institute and a National Skills Commissioner. These are practical, pragmatic recommendations to ensure that our young people are ready for the next generation of jobs as they come online. We all know that the jobs of today are not the jobs of tomorrow. They are already changing. They're being pulled from underneath young people's feet as we speak.

I also welcome the fact that the Minister for Education has provided a lifeline for our universities. Even though there's been a change to activity—we know that we've been very dependent on the international students—he has guaranteed the $18 billion of funding to this sector. It has been incredibly important for this transition through the COVID-19 crisis. But there is also the fact that we have 20,000 new students applying for these short online courses that have been made available because we know that these students need short courses to upskill in this period of transition as we go through the post-COVID period. So I would like to commend the Morrison government for what we are doing for higher education in this sector.

The SPEAKER: The time for the discussion on the matter of public importance has now expired.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER (16:18): I have a short statement before we go back to government business. It's on the electronic access control system and a code of practice for the building. As members would be well aware, the electronic access control system, otherwise known as EACS, is the computer based security card system that replaced the old locking infrastructure—on your office doors and right throughout Parliament House—some time ago here in the House. The system is designed to control access to Parliament House. Specifically, it allows authorised passholders entry into secure areas by using a security pass authenticated by access control readers. EACS has been designed to facilitate remote lockdown capabilities in the event of a major incident or emergency and has been progressively installed throughout the House of Representatives, as you all well know, over the last couple of years. In contrast and for various reasons, the system is not fully installed or operational in the Senate wing. However, after extended negotiations, I can now advise the House that agreement has been reached on a code of practice. The EACS code of practice provides the framework for the management of EACS data, over which there may be claims of privilege. It applies to all parliamentary department employees, contractors, Australian Federal Police and building occupants who manage, operate or use the EACS, including the viewing, storing, accessing, releasing or disposing of data.

I wish to thank all members of the House Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration for sensible consideration of the development of the code. Particularly I want to thank the Chief Government Whip, the member for Forde; and the Chief Opposition Whip, the member for Fowler. Should honourable members have any questions or concerns about the operation of EACS they can contact the Serjeant's office or my office at any time. I thank the House.
BILLS
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Amendment (APRA Industry Funding) Bill 2020
Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2020
Authorised Non-operating Holding Companies Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2020
General Insurance Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2020
Life Insurance Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2020
Retirement Savings Account Providers Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2020
Superannuation Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2020
Education Legislation Amendment (2020 Measures No. 1) Bill 2020
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment (Coronavirus Economic Response Package) Bill 2020
Therapeutic Goods Amendment (2020 Measures No. 1) Bill 2020

Returned from Senate

Messages received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment.

Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House criticises the Government for failing to:

(1) appropriately address the serious issue of veteran suicide, including its stubborn refusal to enact a full Royal Commission into veteran suicide and its insistence on instead establishing a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention; and

(2) introduce enabling legislation to establish a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention."

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (16:21): Can I firstly acknowledge all of those who have contributed to this debate. I'm not summing up for the minister. I know he is here. I could sum up but, no, I won't! I do want to thank all of those who contributed to the debate, because of the strong support for this piece of legislation and the benefits that it will accrue to members of the defence personnel and their families.

Just to remind ourselves, the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020 has three key elements. It will implement the government's commitment to create a Veteran Family Advocate, it will provide changes to support veterans to transition from the Australian Defence Force to civilian employment and it will ensure that all recipients of Department of Veterans' Affairs gold cards are treated equally in terms of their benefits.


Schedule 2 will amend the MRCA to enable pre- and post-employment assistance to eligible former ADF members through the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2020, the MRCA Regulations, and support for employment programs.

Schedule 3 will amend the VEA to extend eligibility for the quarterly energy supplement to eligible repatriation health card holders for all conditions—gold card holders—under the Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests, the British Commonwealth Occupational Force (Treatment) Act 2006 and the Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019.

In thinking about this piece of legislation, it occurred to me that what I should do is to try to work out how many Defence Force members have served overseas since 1991. I did that, because I think there's a bit of a view
around that there really haven't been that many people who have served overseas. I think the figure is probably northwards of 60,000 since 1991, in various theatres. We know, for example, that currently there are around 1,800 people serving in operations in the Middle East through Operation Accordion, where there are 600 personnel; in South Sudan; through Operation Mazurka in Egypt; through Operation Paladin in Israel; through Operation Resolute, the Australian maritime interest with 600 personnel; and through Operation Highroad in Afghanistan, where there remain 200 personnel. There are around 1,800 serving overseas as we speak. The minister will have a better understanding than I do, but I'm guessing that we're talking somewhere north of 60,000 who have served in operations overseas since 1991.

If we think about the number of men and women who have been in uniform without necessarily having served overseas we will understand that current full-time personnel, as of 30 June 2019, are 58,058. That is from the Defence annual report. I'm not certain how many reservists there are currently serving. I'm guessing it's somewhere around 20,000—the minister might nod if I'm right. So, if you think about it, the number of people in uniform currently is probably around 80,000. Then you can ask: that's currently, but what's the churn been through the Defence Force since the 1990s? We are talking a big number. This legislation is very important, because it affects that number. Once you walk into Puckapunyal or Kapooka and you put that uniform on, you're eligible for access to treatment by Department of Veterans' Affairs.

As the minister reminds me, the average career for a Defence Force person is around seven to 7½ years. It's a young person's game. So we're talking about young people joining up in their late teens, early twenties, and they're out of the uniform by their late twenties in large part. Many who come back from overseas operations—and even those who've never left this country; a private pay clerk, a lieutenant general in charge of field, a captain of a ship, or a seaman, or an aircraft engineer or a pilot—male or female, these people have done something that all of us appreciate. They've put on the uniform of their country to serve us. And we owe them obligations as a result of that service. What this piece of legislation does is recognise a number of things. Firstly, it recognises the importance of understanding and comprehending the impact that service has, whether it is overseas or not, on families. I appreciate the minister's initiative about this Defence Force family advocate position because it is really important.

We see Defence Force members in isolation working hard on COVID currently or on bushfires in Australia or on aid work in the South Pacific, doing all manner of things for the community, but it means they're away from home. Unlike us who elect to be here, they can be put in a position where they have to leave their family for an extended period of time at the direction of the government. They sign up for that when they put on the uniform. But that carries with it for us an obligation. We must make sure we understand the importance of looking after their families, and the service men and women themselves.

I've spoken before on many occasions about the issue of transition. But I do say that, if we concentrate on this package of looking after people as individuals and within a family unit and we understand the intent of this legislation, then we're going a long way to addressing what has been a real need in the Defence Force community and the veterans community. I want to thank the minister for taking these initiatives forward. We support them. The transition space to me is really difficult. I'm sure the minister appreciates this. There are a lot of people who come out of service who say: 'That's it. That's it. I want nothing more to do with that uniform.' And they are lost to us, and that's a real challenge. They're the people—them and their families—who need our strong support. This legislation seeks to do that.

In any event, I'm extremely pleased that we've now got the position of the veterans family advocate, who will support the Department of Veterans' Affairs in working to enhance the health and wellbeing of the veteran community. It's an extremely important initiative and one I totally support.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien) (16:29): It being 4.29 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Assange, Mr Julian

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (16:29): Julian Assange is an Australian citizen and was born in Townsville in 1971. He is the founder of WikiLeaks and an award-winning journalist. For the last decade, he has been in confinement or in prison in England. In 2010, WikiLeaks published US government information and documents allegedly provided by US Army officer Chelsea Manning. The US government allege that Assange was a party to the hacking of its IT system, therefore violating the US Espionage Act of 1917, and is attempting to extradite him from England to the USA on charges of conspiracy to receive, obtain and disclose classified information.
In 2010, Sweden also sought to extradite Assange from England to Sweden to face alleged rape charges. In the course of those proceedings, Assange breached bail and sought refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy in England, where he was granted protection until April 2019. On 11 April, on leaving the embassy, he was arrested by English police for breaching bail and sentenced to 50 weeks jail. After more than 60 weeks, he is still in prison. In November 2019, the Swedish government closed their rape case against Assange. The US extradition case commenced on 24 February this year. The case was scheduled to resume on 18 May but has now been pushed out until September.

On the latest figures that I have seen, over 400,000 people have now signed a petition calling for Assange's freedom. A widely held view is that the USA failed to secure its IT system and that its wrongdoings, covert operations and war crimes were publicly and embarrassingly exposed. So, under the protection of national security being breached and lives being endangered, the US wants to make an example of Assange—that exposing US secrets will not be tolerated.

New revelations about the war crimes where 11 civilians, including two journalists, were killed in Baghdad in July 2007 were recently exposed by The Guardian. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any lives were put at risk by the WikiLeaks revelations. It is also worth noting that Assange is not a US citizen and was not in the USA when the hacking occurred. The USA is attempting to extend its internal laws to overseas jurisdictions while simultaneously denying Assange protection under the first amendment that US citizens would be otherwise entitled to, which brings me to Assange's treatment in England.

Assange is in Belmarsh prison for breaching bail in relation to a case that has been dropped. So, had there been no case, there would have been no bail and, logically, no breach. Just as extraordinarily, Assange was harshly being kept in solitary confinement for breach of bail—what others might consider to be a penalty that is much harsher than would be normally expected. He wasn't a criminal who presented a threat to others in any way. It took a revolt by other prisoners for his prison conditions to be eased. His appearance in court earlier this year was in a cage with restricted access even to his lawyers, which I would have thought would be totally against the legal system.

Assange is not an English citizen—which gives rise to concerns about his treatment, the process and his wellbeing—nor has Assange been the only publisher of WikiLeaks material for which he is being pursued. As an Australian citizen, Julian Assange should be provided with Australian diplomatic support the same as any other Australian who finds themselves in a similar situation overseas. He should be returned to Australia and, if the US government want to extradite him, they should apply to an Australian court under Australian law where the principles of justice, as enshrined in clause 29 of the 1215 Magna Carta, still hold true.

The Julian Assange case is a test of Western democracy and the values that millions of lives have been lost defending. I refer to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to know, upholding the Geneva convention, the rules of military engagement and the universal human rights of all people.

Inland Rail

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (16:34): The nation has welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister that, as part of our economy's post COVID-19 economic recovery, the federal and state governments have agreed on the process of fast-tracking assessments and approval processes for major infrastructure projects across the nation. I welcome the fact that at the top of the list—the first that the Prime Minister announced—was the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project. This project will mean some 16,000 jobs created in our national economy and $16 billion worth of economic boost for our nation. And I'm particularly pleased that we will see around half of those jobs and around half of that economic boost happening in Queensland.

That project is not more significant throughout the country than it is in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs region, which I represent in this chamber. We already have two private intermodal freight facilities being developed to link in with the Melbourne-to-Brisbane Inland Rail project. Interlink SQ, with the support of Seaway Intermodal, are currently located on the existing western railway line coming in from Western Queensland towards Toowoomba and Charlton, west of our city. They are, of course, close to the second range crossing that was completed with federal government support and Queensland state government support. Wagners' Wellcamp facility, supported by Pacific National, is adjacent to the new internationally-capable Wellcamp airport. That's significant for our region and that's significant for the whole eastern seaboard.

For around 100 years, our nation has talked about the dream of a standard gauge railway—the efficiencies that that would bring and the connection between our states, let alone the economic benefit to the whole nation. In 2006, we saw increased attention to the proposed Melbourne-to-Brisbane Inland Rail project, with significant works looking at potential corridors. That work has only become more intensive, particularly over the last four
years. That's been through successive ministers for infrastructure and transport. In fact, it's been through successive governments since that time.

Late last year, in December last year, a little over six months ago, we finally saw an intergovernmental agreement signed between the Queensland state government and the federal government that would allow final planning and assessment to proceed. I'm of the understanding that ARTC, the Australian Rail Track Corporation, will be ready in the near future to submit environmental impact statement information to the state government so that they can fulfil their role and their responsibility of overseeing those assessments. We are close to seeing the commencement of this very exciting project.

I want to note that we should all realise that big projects are not easy. Big infrastructure projects have impacts on lands holders in particular, whether it's a freeway in a city, a tunnel in the city or, in this case, a railway line in regional Queensland. They have big impacts and potentially-affected landholders must be addressed and must be accommodated appropriately by federal and state governments and others behind such projects in terms of compensation, mitigation and other ways of managing the impact on their property. They can't be left to manage the impact or bear the cost alone for something that will bring significant benefit to the whole nation.

We need to recognise, as well, the expertise that's gone into this project by ARTC, Arup, SMEC, AECOM, and, in my part of the world, the Toowoomba Regional Council. They've been looking at the engineering, and at the flood studies in particular. I acknowledge there are some that are still not happy with the proposal, and they have every right to raise their concerns. I acknowledge that the Deputy Prime Minister, as the minister responsible, is looking at some of those issues and reviewing some information for them. But, at the end of the day, the coalition is focused on the future. It has a positive approach. I'm pleased to see the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister are leaning in on this project. They want to deal with the challenges, because the only other option would be to say, 'It's all too hard.' Our future is far more important than that; it's far more exciting than that.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (16:39): South Australians were, justifiably, horrified when they heard of Anne Marie Smith's cruel, tragic and unnecessary death in the cane chair which had become her bed and her toilet. Anne Marie was failed by her carer and her NDIS provider—Integrity Care—and she was failed by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Whistleblowers have contacted me to share what appears to be a 'hear no evil, see no evil' management culture at the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission in South Australia, the commission which was set up to ensure that people like Anne Marie are protected. The following stories have been shared with me.

Firstly, a participant reported an alleged sexual assault by a new care worker. The participant had not complained before. The matter was never referred to the investigations team. It was archived and only came to light after the investigator reviewed the file in connection with a separate matter some months later. Secondly, a participant died from the misuse of a strong sedative during what was a routine examination, but the matter was not pursued by the commission as the state director was satisfied that the SAPOL investigation was enough. How could it be that a participant has died as a consequence of the misuse of chemical restraints in the care of an NDIS provider and the commission chose not to investigate? Thirdly, one outright sexual assault, where the participant was photographed, was not referred through to investigations and was dug up several months later by chance. And another notification that languished on the list was an alleged rape of an intellectually disabled participant by one or more care workers. The incident was not referred to the investigations team because the frontline reportable incident officer didn't think the incident was serious enough to warrant immediate action. It was four months before the allegation got to the investigations team—four months!

I'm told that the delay in passing the cases to the investigations team is a common occurrence, and that less than one per cent of reportable incidents make it to investigations. There is just a handful of workers employed to triage reportable incidents. They are deluged with notifications, each having at least 600 open cases on any given day. The commission is a passive receiver of information and complaints, with no risk assessment processes to identify high-risk providers or at-risk participants. Visits to providers are superficial 'meet and greets' by prior arrangement because the state director has decreed there shall be no unannounced visits. Staff are not provided with government vehicles and must use taxis or walk to collect evidence or to make a visit. Heaven help participants in the regions! Triaging delays mean it's often too late to interview a witness or to bring any potential prosecution, given the inability of witnesses to recall details after the passage of several months. Staff are leaving and not being replaced in a timely manner, and there are concerns about aspects of the investigative procedures. The commission may not even meet the Australian Government Investigation Standards.

Staff and former staff hold genuine concerns about the manner in which the commission is carrying out its duties, and the concerns, when raised internally, are falling on deaf ears. I understand that the state director
actually expressed relief that the commission had no idea that Integrity Care posed a risk to participants—he was relieved that the office had no knowledge of the circumstances surrounding Ms Smith's care. Clearly, this is a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of a regulatory body. The fact that Integrity Care wasn't on the commission's radar should have filled the state director with dread, not relief.

This cannot continue. The NDIA must undertake a risk assessment during planning phases and must flag at-risk participants and their providers with the commission. State and federal governments must improve information sharing, because the current bilateral agreement between South Australia and the federal government is clearly not working. Frontline staff must be trained and KPIs must be put in place for the immediate sharing of allegations of serious misconduct with investigators. The commission must investigate every allegation of serious misconduct. SAPOL involvement is no excuse not to investigate. Unannounced visits must happen across all of SA. All records must be immediately available for auditing and there must be a thorough independent investigation into the management of the commission in South Australia.

I am shocked at what I've heard. I'd like to thank the whistleblowers for their courage. Now the federal government must act.

Lindsay Electorate: Dunheved Road Upgrade

Mrs McIntosh (Lindsay) (16:44): On the night of the 2019 election I promised my community of Lindsay that I wouldn't let them down. I'm here to tell you today that I am working really hard to deliver on that promise, and I'm very pleased to announce that the $63½ million that I promised during the election campaign and was announced by the Prime Minister has been confirmed in the 2020-21 federal budget. A total of $4.2 million has already gone to Penrith council for planning and investigative work, and this is all because our community got behind this very important upgrade. During the election campaign, I door-knocked homes around Werrington County, Cambridge Park and Cambridge Gardens, and it was the people in these homes who told me their concerns about the safety of Dunheved Road when they turn into the shops and also about the congestion. So, with your support, I took your concerns to the Prime Minister. Hundreds of you signed a petition, and then the Prime Minister announced the $63½ million. Since then, I've been fighting to get that funding commitment secured. I've spoken to the Prime Minister and I've lobbied the urban and infrastructure minister and the Treasurer, and they've also gotten behind this very important project for our community.

I'll give you an insight into some of the concerns that the people of Lindsay have around Dunheved Road. Timmy said: 'The road is worse than a roller-coaster. Potholes everywhere and terrible in peak-hour traffic. The community has waited a long time for this upgrade.' Joanne said: 'We are so overdue for an upgrade. Thank you, Melissa, for all your hard work.' And, yes, I have been working hard, because you have been working hard too.

The $63½ million that has been announced for the 2020-21 budget goes some way to a full upgrade of Dunheved Road. But, to get all the benefits that will ensure the people in our community can get to where they're going—to work and home again—faster and more safely and ensure more people can work closer to where they live, the full price of the upgrade is $127 million, so my work here is by no means finished. I'll continue fighting for our community. I'll be advocating for the full upgrade—the full $127 million. I'll be both taking that fight to the state government and lobbying our federal government so that our community can have that full benefit and so that our community can get to work and home again safely and more quickly and our families can use that road safely.

The safety and health of my community of Lindsay continues to be my top priority. Today I'm very pleased to announce the $63½ million in the federal budget.

Global MND Awareness Day

Cunningham Electorate: Queen's Birthday Honours

Ms Bird (Cunningham) (16:48): I'm wearing this blue flower as Sunday is Global MND Awareness Day. Motor neurone disease affects more than 350,000 people across the world, and 2,100 Australians are currently living with it. One of those is Professor Justin Yerbury, the Wollongong man I've spoken about many times in this place. Justin works at the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute and the University of Wollongong School of Chemistry and Molecular Bioscience. While living with MND, he, along with his colleagues, has spent the last decade trying to understand the underlying causes of MND—and I particularly acknowledge Dr Luke McAlary and senior research assistant Natalie Farrawell.

In past years, the Motor Neurone Disease Association of NSW has seen the awareness week marked by a fundraising event, the Walk to d'Feet MND event at Bulli, which is supported by many individuals and community groups. Last year, Professor Yerbury's team of researchers were among the 360 people who registered to take part in the five kilometre coastal walk. It was an extremely lovely day and a really good outcome. While
we obviously won’t be walking this year, I did want to give a shout-out to Justin, his family and his colleagues on Global Motor Neurone Disease Awareness Day and extend that to all Australians either researching and working in this field or living with motor neurone disease.

Several locals from my area were recognised in the Queen’s birthday honours and I want to let the House know about some of these people. Terry Wetherall was acknowledged with an AM for his significant service to business and commerce, the superannuation sector and the community. Terry has been known to me for a very long time, as was his father, Ray, who also received an OAM. Terry, in his dad's tradition of community service, I have to say, and as he would say, has been the president of the Illawarra Business Chamber, the New South Wales Business Chamber and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He's the director of Industry SuperFunds and the chair of CareSuper, a member of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Communications Cities Reference Group and a member of both the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Property Institute. He is a justice of the peace and a founding member of an amazing local mental health service, One Door Mental Health, in Illawarra. He played rugby for Kiama and went on to become president of Illawarra rugby. He was also active in lobbying to get us a team in rugby. As if all that weren't enough to keep anyone very busy, he has also served on the sub-branch of the Port Kembla RSL. Terry absolutely epitomises community service. Congratulations, Terry.

Joe Davidson is also very well known to me personally, and I was very pleased to see him receive an award. He's been secretary of the Wollongong sub-branch of the RSL since 2008 and served as the administrator of the Port Kembla RSL sub-branch previously. He was a trainer and strapper for the collegians and west rugby league clubs over 24 years and told the Illawarra Mercury his most cherished award was being best club man three times. He is also the former head trainer for the Illawarra Steelers and St George Illawarra Dragons and strapper for them as well. His community contributions include many other roles such as justice of the peace, first state officer, one-time national serviceman and RSL welfare officer. He's a very humble man but very well deserving of the award. Congratulations, Joe.

Bede Parkes is from Helensburgh and got her award for service to Helensburgh. She is a very dearly loved and respected member of that community and has given great, great service to that community over many, many years. In particular, for example, she manned the white elephant stall at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School for 40 years and has volunteered for the Holy Cross Catholic Church for her whole life. Congratulations, Bede.

I don't have a great deal of time left, but I want to just let the House know that I'm a great advocate of the arts and I will be taking another opportunity to recognise Machiel Berghuis, who also received an award, and to acknowledge the police officers from my area—Superintendent Stephen Hegarty, Chief Inspector John Klepczarek and police education officer John Morahan—for their awards in the Queen’s honours.

Child Abuse

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (16:53): I want to address the House this afternoon on the disturbing spike in child exploitation and sexual abuse that has occurred during the coronavirus pandemic. Due to social distancing and homeschooling, children's screen time has increased. This has been accompanied by an increase in child predators grooming or exploiting children online. According to the eSafety Commissioner, over March, April and May, there were significant surges in reporting volumes compared to 2019, with an 80 per cent increase in child sexual abuse content. In addition to this, the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation has released data that is shocking but perhaps not surprising. Their Child Protection Triage Unit has stated that the average number of child exploitation reports it receives has increased from 776 to 1,731 a month. In fact, every five minutes a webpage showed a child being sexually abused for the gratification of an offender. This shows us just how staggering the reach of child exploitation is.

While this is a global issue, we cannot deny how prevalent this issue is here in Australia. The sexual abuse of children has become more organised and extreme, with technology posing new and evolving challenges for law enforcement. Last financial year, 39 per cent of convicted Commonwealth child sex offenders did not spend a single day in jail. This is not an anomaly. In the last five years, about 40 per cent of Commonwealth child sex offenders were not sentenced to spend a day in prison. Sentencing rarely reflects the seriousness of the crime committed. It's simply not good enough, and it does not reflect the community's expectations. That statistic lets down survivors. It lets down the whole community.

Evidence has increasingly shown that child sexual abuse leaves lifelong trauma and impacts on survivors. The seriousness of these crimes demands changes to our criminal justice system, which has proven to be insufficient in punishing, deterring or rehabilitating offenders. I feel very strongly about this issue, not only because I'm a parent but also because I worked with vulnerable children as a psychologist before entering this place. The Morrison government's Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Crimes Against Children and Community Protection...
Measures) Bill 2019 has been designed to make several changes to our justice system so that the sentencing of child sex offenders aligns with community expectations. Among other amendments, the bill aggregates the sentencing factors for all federal offenders where a person uses their community standing to facilitate the crime. In recent months, we have seen the reported allegations and convictions in the media once again expose the deep breach of trust when those in positions of authority—teachers, religious leaders, health professionals and even politicians—abuse children. Some of these stories relate directly to my community in Reid. Where someone uses a position of authority to carry out serious child exploitation or abuse, there must be sentencing that reflects the nature of their crime.

To come back to my earlier point, as our children spend more time in front of screens, we as parents and carers share a responsibility to ensure their safety online. Our government has invested more than $100 million to give parents and children the resources they need to navigate safely through the digital world. I encourage parents in Reid and elsewhere to visit esafety.gov.au and to use the tools there to keep their children safe online.

The bill introduces mandatory minimum sentencing, presumptions in favour of cumulative sentences and a presumption against bail, and it increases maximum penalties across the spectrum of child sex offences. One such example is the creation of aggregated offences where a child who has an intellectual disability has been a victim of sexual abuse. This bill is another example of the Morrison government's commitment to protect children in Australia and overseas from the dangers of sexual exploitation and abuse and to improve the justice outcomes for survivors of child sex offenders. We have listened to the experiences of survivors and we will keep taking steps to protect them and to protect the vulnerable children at risk of abuse and exploitation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do now adjourn. I call the member for Chisholm for about two minutes.

**East West Link**

Ms LIU (Chisholm) (16:58): It is now critically important to start building the East West Link, a road connecting two major highways in Melbourne so traffic in the city can be reduced. This project has been stalled by the Victorian government for many years, but now the need for it is greater than ever before. It will create over 3,700 jobs and ensure that Victorians are able to reduce the amount of time spent in traffic and have more productive time at work or spend more time with their families. Victorians need projects like the East West Link to create local jobs for local people and to keep our local economy ticking. The coalition have long been committed to delivering the East West Link. In May last year the Morrison government committed to delivering the eastern section of the East West Link with an increased $4 billion commitment. The Victorian government do not even need to put up a single dollar, yet they are standing in the way. People living in Chisholm and in the eastern suburbs are crying out for this project to go ahead. So our direction is clear: the East West Link must be built. It will take pressure off our major cities while supporting growth in our regions and getting people home sooner and safer. The sooner the Victorian government can get on with the job and work with us on the East West Link, the better the outcome will be for the people of Chisholm and all Victorians.

The SPEAKER: It being 5.00 pm, the House stands adjourned until Tuesday 4 August 2020 at 12 noon.

House adjourned at 17:00
Thursday, 18 June 2020

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough) took the chair at 10:00.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Live Animal Exports

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (10:00): People in any electorate and around the country have been aghast watching the latest episode in the disaster-riddled live sheep export trade circus. It's hard to believe that sheep will again be transported in dangerous summer conditions by an operator that simply cannot get its act together—an operator in breach of arrangements that we were told by this government would be enforced, in circumstances showing over and over again to produce terrible animal suffering.

How on earth did it get to this? A live export ship, having decided to run hard up against the summer moratorium deadline, arrives in WA with a number of crew members infected with coronavirus. Despite the fact that shipping has proved to be a consistent source of infection, the ship had no apparent health plan or preparations. Despite the fact there were men on board who were sick and had fevers, the onboard vet—not a doctor—decided that there was no coronavirus, and the Department of Agriculture gave that advice to WA Health. That advice was utterly wrong. As the ship arrived, Australian personnel went on board with no warning that it was an infected ship. I guess not surprisingly, when you consider everything else that was wrong in this episode, there were no contingencies in place for the sheep already in the feedlot. On that basis it is very hard to understand the department's backflip in approving an exemption for the live export of sheep, especially now that it's nearly three weeks further into the summer moratorium period.

That moratorium exists for a reason. Transporting tens of thousands of sheep in old, substandard ships to the hottest part of the world at the hottest time of the year has proved a recipe for animal welfare disaster, as we saw with the Awassi Express and on countless similar voyages. There's no doubt that allowing this ship to travel will put the welfare of sheep at risk. The fact that an exemption is even being considered is entirely the fault of the live exporters. They chose to run a ship ripe with coronavirus at the last moment with no proper health or contingency planning at a time when shipping has proved one of the greatest risks in terms of COVID-19.

But why would this industry bother to do anything else when they know, every time they break the rules, there's an endless supply, a bottomless bucket, of second chances from this government? It took this government six years to acknowledge their mistake in removing Labor's reform to create an Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports. With all their talk of imposing proper regulation on an industry that has been a serial offender in terms of committing gross and grave animal welfare failures, there is let-off after let-off after let-off that follows breach after breach after failure. It's past time for the government to show leadership and make the transition out of live sheep export that the rest of Australia has done and that New Zealand has done in favour of an expanded frozen and chilled meat trade, with higher-value exports, more jobs, greater stability for Australian farmers but, most importantly, no cruelty for sheep.

Herbert Electorate: Defence Infrastructure

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (10:03): Townsville is Australia's largest garrison city. We are fortunate to be the home of Lavarack Barracks, RAAF Base Townsville—there are five aviation regiments there—the Ross Island Barracks and the Townsville Field Training Area. Many bases means there are many facilities, which in turn flows on to great opportunities for local businesses for maintenance and construction. There are plenty of those opportunities right now for small businesses in Townsville. This is very timely as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

I'd like to highlight a few of the opportunities now. Around 400 jobs are currently being supported by the construction of the $40 million CH-47 Chinook helicopter facility. I had the opportunity to inspect the progress of these works a few weeks ago. The project includes: new aircraft shelters; a support facility; working accommodation; and tarmac parking for the three Chinooks for the 5th Aviation Regiment. The locals working there are very excited to see our projects rolling out in the community, and through this COVID-19 pandemic they continue to be able to do their jobs on the bases.

Some 90 per cent of these projects have been delivered by local businesses, which is an excellent result. This has been achieved through Defence's Local Industry Capability Plan, which aims to ensure that as much of this kind of work as possible goes to our builders, concreters, plumbers, sparkies, architects and so on. We have plenty of very capable local contractors. I will always fight to ensure that they get the work over anyone else in the country, because we have highly trained, highly capable people.
On the same visit I had the opportunity to see more local workers constructing the $10.8 million health centre, also on the RAAF base. This is a much-needed upgrade for the members on base. It will house primary care, including mental health and rehab; an in-patient unit; a pharmacy; physiotherapy; and dental and health accommodation. It's extremely important because their last facility was substandard.

There's a lot more work in the pipeline for our local workforce at our Defence bases. We have just brought forward 21 new work packages which will be open for tender by the end of the year. These include one project worth more than $8 million, and the rest up to $8 million. These projects will include upgrades to buildings and important maintenance on existing facilities. The work requires a broad range of skill sets and supply chains. We know that locals are excited about this, and I want to encourage the ASMTI, the Australian-Singapore Military Training Initiative, to look local first and to support local businesses, because we have the capability to do it locally without all these blow-ins from all around the country.

**Bowden, Mr Michael John, OAM**

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (10:06): Two years ago tonight, members of my local branch of the ALP gathered in Alice Springs to farewell Mike and Judy Bowden, who were leaving Alice Springs to live and be supported by family in Darwin. Sadly, Mike passed away on Easter Sunday, and Judy is now in care in Darwin. Mike was born on the eve of the 1947 VFL season, and VFL became an important part of his life. He played in the Richmond premiership in 1969. But that wasn't his biggest part. Mike was raised a Catholic in postwar working-class Melbourne. Life centred on family, church, education and sport. He matriculated from St Kevin's College, then spent two years in the seminary at Werribee before deciding he could make a wider contribution to society by embracing the plight of the less well off.

He met Judith and they married in 1969, a few months after he had achieved premiership success with Richmond footy club and had obtained a teaching degree. A family followed, raised in Robinvale, in Victoria's north-west Sunraysia district, and they remained there until the early 1980s.

In 1983 the family of now five boys moved to Pukatja, in Pitjantjatjara-Yankuntjatjara community in the north of South Australia, where his daughter Majella was born in 1985. Mike believed in the return of lands, equity in education and its delivery, and a respect for uniqueness, diversity and that which had come before, and which remains. He moved to Alice Springs, firstly working at the Catholic high school, before moving to Tangentyere council as the community development manager. He later had stints as principal at the Ngukurr and Minyerri schools in the Top End. His final contribution was at O'Loughlin Catholic College, where his son Rhett is now principal.

Mike did great things, but, for him, it was the little things that mattered. He loved the pure contest that went with sport and the outdoors and he was a serious bike rider. He never stopped engaging with the community, saying in a final interview:

I hope my life has been lived in good relationships with all other humans, all other life. I love creation and everything in it. Mike never allowed himself to be co-opted by others. He was a community leader, a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia and a life member of the Australian Labor Party and the Richmond Football Club. In 2019, exploring the Arrernte concept of Atyerre and looking for the alignment between Christian doctrine and the Arrernte religious traditions, Mike was awarded a doctorate in theology, and, at the same time, he received delivery of the 2019 Richmond premiership cup.

Mike faced his diagnosis of motor neuron disease with courage and was an inspiration to all who knew him. As his end was near, he considered that he was waiting to get on the escalator. He caught that escalator to mystery on Holy Saturday, 11 April 2020. Mike is survived by his brother Frank and sister Joanne, his wife Judy, his six children—Sean, Rhett, Kane, Joel, Patrick, Charlie and Majella—and 18 grandchildren. I acknowledge the contribution and notes from Sean, Kane and Majella Bowden, which helped me with this speech.

**Cowper Electorate: Queen's Birthday Honours**

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (10:09): I rise today to congratulate Mr Eric Claussen of Port Macquarie, who was recently awarded the Public Service Medal for outstanding public service to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. Mr Claussen has demonstrated outstanding and sustained commitment to firefighting and community safety throughout his 40 years of service to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. He displayed this commitment primarily through his involvement in major incident roles, fire and incident management training and the development and delivery of the Lessons Learned Program. Since joining the service as a field officer in 1976, he has gained experience and knowledge through his service in a variety of diverse roles. After progressing his rank to become a ranger, he went on to acting manager of the operations unit...
and then to manager of the flight unit, before commencing his current role of senior project officer of Lessons Learned. His commitment and contribution to incident management and the development and delivery of fire management training far exceeds the expectations of his usual role. Mr Claussen has devoted significant and sustained out-of-work hours throughout his career, with his dedication regarded by his peers as unparalleled. With 40 years of dedicated service to the community, he has been suitably recognised with this award. I would like to say congratulations and thank you to Mr Eric Claussen.

I would also like to congratulate Mr David Hitchcock, of Dorrigo, who was recently awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal. Mr Hitchcock has provided almost 40 years to the community of New South Wales, including with several agencies that respond to fire and emergencies. He currently serves as a retained firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW, commencing with that organisation in 1988. He commenced fire duties in 1980 with the then Forestry Commission of New South Wales, and then moved to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service with a focus on incident management and training. He now runs an international fire and emergency training company. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience to lead and develop the local Dorrigo crew, ensuring the community is protected, and he's highly regarded by his colleagues.

Mr Hitchcock has provided dedicated commitment to the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and to the community over 22 years. Therefore, with almost 40 years of dedicated service to the community of New South Wales and current service as a retained firefighter, he has been suitably recognised by this award. Such recognition reflects a lifetime of commitment to the safety of the community and, in particular, the leadership he has shown during emergencies, especially during the recent bushfire crisis. Thank you, David, for your service, and congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

**Kingsford Smith Electorate: Little Bay Cove Development**

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (10:12): Our community in Little Bay continues to fight the big developer, Meriton, and its disgraceful plans for overdevelopment. The Meriton Group proposal to impose high-rise towers on Little Bay Cove is a shocker. It ignores the approved master plan for the site which already permits low-density, low-rise residential development. Instead, Meriton want to increase allowable heights by four times the master plan.

_A division having been called in the House of Representatives—_

Sitting suspended from 10:13 to 11:00

Mr THISTLETHWAITE: The Meriton Group proposal to impose high-rise towers on Little Bay cove is a shocker. It ignores the approved master plan for the site, which already permits lower density, low-rise residential development. Instead, Meriton wants to increase allowable height limits by four times. Their plan translates to nearly 2,000 more units, in blocks of up to 22 storeys, along with a hotel. But the community campaign to help save Little Bay got a boost last week when the Randwick local planning panel unanimously rejected the Meriton proposal. The panel is an independent hearing and assessment panel that assesses development applications and provides expert advice on planning proposals. The panel handed down clear advice to Randwick Council. It recommended that the planning proposal should be rejected. The case against this plan is clear. Randwick Council's own planners previously released their assessment reports on the plan, and the planners recommended it go to the local planning panel. It said that it does not support the planning proposal and that it should not proceed to a gateway determination because, 'It fails to meet both the strategic merit test and the site merit test.' The panel said that the approved masterplan should not be changed, saying, 'There are no changed circumstances which warrant changes to the existing planning controls for the site.'

The existing master plan was put in place when Meriton bought the land in 2017. They knew what they were buying. Yet, the Meriton proposal wants to double the population in an area that's already struggling with traffic congestion and poor public transport. Meriton's Little Bay plan would increase the share of high-density housing in the area to nearly 80 per cent. That would make Little Bay one of the most densely populated areas in Sydney. It would be 7½ kilometres away from the first light rail station and 12 kilometres away from the closest train station. It doesn't make sense, and fast-tracking the proposal is not in order either.

Common sense has prevailed, and Meriton must now abide by the planning panel decision. If Randwick Council rejects it, Meriton should accept the council decision on behalf of the community and reduce the size of this development to comply with the master plan. Ten thousand people have objected to this proposal, and I will continue to fight this ridiculous development—(Time expired)

**Bonner Electorate: Lindum Crossing Upgrade**

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (11:02): I would like to take this opportunity to provide the chamber with an update on the much-needed upgrade to the notorious Lindum crossing at Lytton. Just last week I received an email from one
of my constituents, Harrison, who sent me dashcam footage of yet another miss with a semitrailer at this rail level crossing. Unfortunately, this is a daily occurrence, and every day this project is delayed the lives of motorists and pedestrians are put at risk. While I have delivered $400,000 towards the Lindum station precinct study, and a further $85 million to get this project underway, the Queensland Labor government has yet to commit project funding for this desperately needed upgrade. However, I am pleased to advise that the study by TMR, which has been underway for months now, is starting to move forward, with technical investigations now underway. Following the public consultation period, we found that a safer level crossing, increased car parking and improved pedestrian and bike access were some of the top priorities identified. Local knowledge plays a crucial role in delivering the best outcome for the Lindum crossing rail upgrade. While we know this intersection is dangerous, the public consultation will help determine the best solutions for all. Thank you to everyone who has shared their ideas and completed the survey.

As the local member, community safety is my top priority. I fought for this project over many years. I ran a petition, which gained more than 7,000 signatures, and successfully lobbied for the $85 million in funding. Brisbane City Council has also come to the party, with $40 million for this project. The only level of government holding this up now is the Queensland Labor government.

This level crossing and fiveways intersection is a never-ending nightmare for motorists during peak hour. It needs to be fixed as soon as possible. The study is currently looking at a variety of options to make this happen, including grade separation, upgrading the level crossing and relocating the level crossing. This project will also consider station and parking upgrades. After three years of lobbying, petitioning and securing funding for the Lindum crossing upgrade, I look forward to hopefully welcoming a funding commitment by the Queensland Labor government. The safety of rail commuters, pedestrians and motorists depends on all levels of government working together. While Meat Loaf might say, 'Two out of three ain't bad,' in this case three out of three is necessary to deliver for the bayside community.

Vinnies CEO Sleepout

Mr DAVID SMITH (Bean) (11:05): After the parliament rises tonight, I'll be taking part in my sixth St Vincent de Paul CEO sleepout with my three children. My parliamentary colleagues Libby Coker, Tony Sheldon, Jason Clare and Emma McBride will also be taking part. As many of you would know, Canberra winters can be harsh and cold, getting down to as low as minus six degrees. In the last census, it was estimated that over 115,000 people in Australia were homeless, of which over 1,500 came from the ACT. By the very nature of this problem, though, the census can only estimate what is likely to be a much larger problem. Many of our fellow Australians are living in severely crowded dwellings or supported accommodation, and seven per cent of homeless people are rough sleeping—living in improvised dwellings, tents and sleeping out. So, tonight, along with hundreds of other community leaders across Australia, I'll be taking part in the annual one-night sleepout to raise money for Vinnies emergency support services. The funds raised will help keep the power on, provide beds and feed thousands of Australians this winter.

This year, due to social distancing requirements, we won't be doing it in the same way in the one location, otherwise it would've been at the wonderfully chilly Canberra stadium here. This year Vinnies has taken the opportunity to highlight that homelessness is not just limited to sleeping on the streets; it also includes a range of other unstable and difficult conditions. Indeed, it's estimated that 15 per cent of homeless people rely on couch surfing in the homes of family, friends and acquaintances for a safe place to sleep at night.

There are good stories. The recent emergency response to relocate thousands of homeless Australians to hotels and student accommodation prior to the coronavirus lockdown enabled a high rate of transition to permanent housing in states like South Australia. However, we are missing an opportunity to invest substantially in the social housing sector in the government's response to the recession. Like Labor's response to the GFC, the government could have taken a decision to invest in people's lives and help people secure the foundation to a better life: a secure home. Tonight, Thursday, when my family and I are sleeping out, I'll be reflecting on what many Australians endure each night and what we can do together, across parties and governments, and with organisations like St Vincent de Paul, to ensure that every Australian has a place that they can call home.

HomeBuilder

Fisher Electorate: Ready, Set, Go! Program

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (11:08): Mr Deputy Speaker, as you know, before I came into this place I used to be a barrister and, prior to that, I used to be a builder. I worked closely with the Assistant Treasurer to develop the HomeBuilder program. What many of my colleagues were telling me in the building industry was that work was going to absolutely fall off the cliff for them around August or September. Some of them are telling me they have 50 jobs on the go now, but, come September, they will have zero. I'm very proud to say that this government
stepped in and provided a demand-driven program to assist builders, electricians, carpenters, bricklayers—you name it—anybody working in the building industry.

It's a $680 million demand-driven program that will not only help builders stay in business during this COVID recovery period but help people get into their dream home, particularly young people who have been running the rent race for, perhaps, many years. It's very exciting, not just for builders but for home owners as well. As we know, it's a $25,000 grant. The interest from the community has been absolutely breathtaking: 355,210 people have visited the HomeBuilder website and 27,258 have registered their interest in this program. As John McNamara from SMS finance indicated to me, he's been in the finance sector for 30 years and he has never been as busy since HomeBuilder was announced. To give you another idea of the impacts of this HomeBuilder package, a housing estate on the Sunshine Coast was sold out in one day after HomeBuilder was announced. For the sceptics on the other side, this is something that the industry has been screaming out for, and we have delivered.

I also want to talk about Tom Loane. Last night, I rang him. He's a 16-year-old and he's the inaugural winner of the Fisher Ready, Set, Go! program. I provide $1,000 three times a year to young kids who are looking to get an apprenticeship or a traineeship. With that $1,000, Tom's going to buy some tools. He wants to be an electrician. More power to Tom! Well done, Tom! He's going to use that money for tools and also for some driving lessons to help get that apprenticeship next year. More power to you, Tom!

**Australia Post**

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (11:11): Unbelievably, this week the government has voted to slash postal deliveries at least 19 times. The Morrison government is determined to change daily postal delivery to two days a week and reduce letter-delivery time from three days after posting to five business days; effectively, seven days. COVID-19 has reminded us about the negative consequences of social isolation. We want to be able to connect, but not everybody has the NBN or the money to pay for internet services and not everyone can get onto Zoom, and this government is trying to cut letter-delivery services that particularly older people in my electorate rely on.

Letters and cards mean a great deal to people in Dunkley. Here's just a very small sample of what they've been telling me. For Helen, it's the only way she gets to communicate with her grandbubba, and cards are a way to send a special message. Tracy's elderly relatives get excited when they get a card in the mail, because it lets them know that they're being thought of. Janet's 87-year-old neighbour doesn't have a computer. Pete is dismayed that Australia Post has been destroyed. Geoff has pointed out to me that he feels cuts to Australia Post service delivery have been going on for at least 18 months and he doesn't at all believe that this is really a COVID-19 measure from the government. He fears that these changes are intended to be permanent. Geoff's fears are shared by people across my electorate and by the Labor members of this place, and that's why we're fighting this government's regulation.

We know that the demand for parcel delivery has increased. It's forecast to increase by 20 to 25 per cent over the next few years, well ahead of pre-COVID forecast of 10 per cent. Parcel deliveries are up 65 per cent because of online shopping. It's going to be booming, so why is this not an opportunity to preserve and create jobs in Australia Post? Isn't that what we all want: job creation? The government talks the talk about JobMaker, but in the next breath puts a regulation into the parliament which will lead to job losses at Australia Post. It's about laying off unionised workers and shifting workload to contractors; cutting some jobs, transitioning others onto lower wages. Job cuts and reduced postal services are not on for my community, and using COVID-19 as cover to do it and pretend it's temporary is just unacceptable. That's why I voted against the government's regulation every time. It's why Labor has been fighting it, tooth and nail, every day in the parliament this week, and it's why Labor will keep fighting for it. To the people in Dunkley who have contacted me by email, phone or on Facebook: you can be assured we won't let this rest.

**Brisbane Electorate: Queen's Birthday Honours**

Mr EVANS (Brisbane—Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management) (11:14): The Queen's Birthday honours list gives us an opportunity to acknowledge the extraordinary achievements and the community service of our fellow Australians. So it's with much pride that I formally acknowledge these recent honourees from the electorate of Brisbane.

Firstly, three residents have been awarded an Order of Australia in recognition of their achievements in the fields of health, medicine and medical research. Dr Michael Redmond has been awarded for his significant service to medicine, neurosurgery and medical organisations. Dr Redmond is the director of neurosurgery at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital as well as serving as the head of neurosurgery at the Royal Darwin Hospital. He was central to the establishment of the children's neurological service at the Lady Cilento hospital and served as director of pediatric neurosurgery there until 2017.
Professor Jeanine Young has been awarded for her significant service to tertiary education, medical research and nursing. Professor Young is one of the nation's most respected leaders in the field of perinatal and infant mortality, and is currently serving as lead researcher into infant deaths in Indigenous communities, alongside her other work at the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Beth Mohle has been awarded for her significant service to nursing as secretary of the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union. This is a fitting and timely honour and a tribute to the thousands of health workers she represents who have served at the forefront of Australia's response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

Other Brisbane recipients of the Medal of the Order of Australia include Mrs Margot de Groot, for her service to the law, professional legal bodies and to women in business; Mr Peter Turnbull, for his significant service to business administration and to corporate governance institutes; and Mrs Margaret Hinton, for her significant service to education, philosophy and professional associations.

I'd also like to acknowledge these Brisbane residents awarded Medals of the Order of Australia: my good friend, Peter Constantini, for his service to business, particularly in education, skills and training; Dr Arthur Briner, for his service to the Jewish community and ophthalmology; Dr Harold Paul Spiro, for his service to pediatric ophthalmology; Mr Tashi Tsering, for his service to education and Buddhism; and Mrs Geena Luckin, for her community service, including her tireless work with the Crosby Park Meals on Wheels service, where I caught up with her again recently to see the amazing work that organisation does throughout our community. These outstanding Australians have made a wonderful contribution to our city, our nation and the wider world. On behalf of the Brisbane community, I offer them our congratulations and thanks, and I extend our best wishes to all the recipients of the Queen's Birthday honours list.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): If no member present objects, three-minute constituency statements may continue for a total of 60 minutes.

Gilmore Electorate: Manyana Matters Environmental Association

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (11:17): The Manyana community has had a harrowing year this year. The bushfires that ravaged so much of our coast burned the majority of the bushland in this beautiful coastal village. The bushland is right up against the homes, and you can see how close the flames came. Alex and June Frew heartbreakingly suffered burns to 50 per cent of their bodies battling the fire at their Manyana home. They have been through a lot, but their struggles aren't over.

The community is now looking to the government to make sure that no local threatened species are harmed by a development that was approved 12 years ago. Clearing was due to begin and a fence has been constructed, but so far the community has fought hard to delay that from going ahead. It was Alex and June's first task to protest this development after leaving hospital—that is how strongly the community feels about this.

There is no doubt that circumstances have changed significantly in that time. You only have to visit Manyana and look around to see that. A reassessment of the environmental conditions is certainly warranted. We don't know what impact the bushfires have had on our flora and fauna, but, as at right now, the government has not done the necessary ecological audits so we can know exactly what this summer meant for our native species. This is absolutely critically needed information. We may have hundreds of newly threatened species; we may have species who have lost all their habitat bar this one small parcel of land. We just don't know, and that is why Labor has been calling on the government to do this audit.

With the latest delay to work starting on the site, the environment minister has the opportunity to intervene and ensure the proper environmental assessments of this changed landscape are undertaken. I wrote to the minister on 15 May and again on 1 June, stressing the urgent need for clarity and review. I am still waiting for her response.

I recently met with members of the Manyana Matters Environmental Association. They are a passionate group and committed to the cause, but they feel exhausted. They have spent the year fighting, first the bushfires and now to protect our precious native wildlife in the Federal Court. But, as Bill put it, why do they have to do the government's job? Where is the minister? The community deserves those assurances that this development is not going to do more harm to an already fragile ecosystem. People like Alex and June shouldn't be left to take up this fight—they have fought enough. So, again, I ask the Minister for the Environment to stand up and give the Manyana community the answers they deserve before it's too late.

Hazlett, Seaman Brock

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (11:20): On occasions, sadly, we receive sad and disappointing correspondence to our offices. Of late, I received a letter from Mr Brad Hazlett, who's very involved with the Air Force Cadets. He's a constituent of my electorate in Shailer Park. The reason Mr Hazlett wrote to me was to inform me of the loss of his son, Leading Seaman Brock Hazlett. Brock William Hazlett, or Billy, as he
was affectionately known to his friends in the Royal Australian Navy, passed away unexpectedly in this sleep despite the best efforts of his wife and paramedics.

Brock was a foundation student at the St Mary MacKillop Primary School at Birkdale, and as a young man spent his weekends on North Stradbroke Island where he enjoyed swimming, fishing and found the joy and happiness in camping. He loved footy, as many young men do, and played rugby union and rugby league at school and for the Redlands footy club. At age 17, Brock commenced at Recruit School at HMAS Cerberus in Melbourne with the initial aim of becoming a carpenter in the Army. Instead, Brock was offered an aviation technician role to maintain helicopters. He took up that offer, and he never looked back.

He joined 816 Squadron of the Royal Australian Navy and was based at Nowra on HMAS Albatross. In 2019, he received a commendation from the squadron's commanding officer for outstanding achievement whilst performing the role of trade supervisor, where he played a critical role in moulding and shaping the MH-60R helicopter technicians. He soon called Nowra home and continued his love for footy there, playing with the Shoalhaven football club. Although Brock was committed to his service in the Navy, it didn't prevent him from finding the love of his life, Carissa, whom he met in 2009. They married in 2018. He was a proud father of Hannah, his nine-month-old daughter, whom he loved and cherished. Brock leaves this world a friend, a son, a brother, a father and a husband. His loss was immense and had a tremendous impact on his family.

The Australian Defence Force plays a pivotal role in protecting our nation. On behalf of Mr Hazlett, I want to thank and acknowledge all the service men and women who serve and have served our nation. In particular, he wanted me to thank the Royal Australian Navy and Commander Gerald Savvakis, commanding officer of HMAS Moreton, and chaplain Stephen Briggs, the support chaplain of the HMAS Moreton, for providing comfort and support to Mr Hazlett's family during this difficult time. 'The mateship and pastoral care provided by the ADF is second to none,' Mr Hazlett said. I will leave with these heartfelt words from Mr Hazlett: 'I hope to never forget my son and the important role that the Navy played in turning a 17-year-old boy into a man. He found what he was looking for at 17 and never looked back. May he rest in peace.'

Motor Neurone Disease

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (11:23): I acknowledge the member for Forde's fine testimony and pass on my condolences to the Hazlett family.

This Sunday is the motor neurone disease Blue Cornflower Day, and I'm wearing a blue cornflower today. I pay tribute to the 2,100 people living with motor neurone disease in Australia today, and the 14 more that are diagnosed each week. I want to thank the member for Mitchell for raising awareness around MND. Legendary Essendon football player and former Melbourne Football Club coach Neale Daniher wrote about his MND diagnosis, 'No matter what the disease, I will fight with MND. You can follow her on Facebook at @MogRunsForMND and you can support her on the Australia Moves for MND site. Just search for Morgana on that website and you will find her. Whether we're running, donating or praying, I invite all Australians to keep people with MND in their hearts on Sunday.

Page Electorate: Clunes Cricket Club

Hayman, Mr Allan, PSM

Mr HOGAN (Page—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (11:26): Clunes Cricket Club this year are celebrating their 100th birthday, and there is going to be a celebration later this year. In September 1920, the
Clunes Cricket Club was formed. Clunes junior cricket was started in 1992 by Russell White, the principal of Clunes Public School. He was helped at the time by Michael and Joy Collings, Terry Francis and Phil McCarthy.

There have been many successful players from the Clunes Cricket Club over the decades who have reached state, national and international levels. For a village of just a few hundred people, it is a highly impressive list. Sam Trimble had a successful career playing with Queensland's Sheffield Shield team. Sammy-Jo Johnson right now is a fast pace bowler for the Queensland Fire and the Brisbane Heat. Olivia Osborne has represented New South Wales. Lewin and Caelan Maladay have both been very successful players. Jack Cooper has played for Queensland, and now plays for the Gold Coast Dolphins—indeed, he is the brother of Tom and Ben Cooper, who have both played international cricket. Simon Milenko now plays for the Hobart Hurricanes. Lachlan Barnsley plays first grade premier cricket in Sydney. Historically there's many more, including Allen Pearson; Glenn Trimble, who is the son of Sam Trimble; Warren and Errol Noble; Neville Emery; Robert Crane; and Don Allen. Also, Matthew Phelps, a Clunes boys, went on to have a very distinguished cricketing career. Not a bad record for a village of just a few hundred people!

I might add that I was the coach of Clunes Kanga team for a couple of years in the early 2000s, when my son Sean was a young boy. I can say quite categorically that none of them have gone on to have a stellar career, for which I accept full responsibility due to my lack of technical knowledge.

I would also like to thank the current committee members who are putting together the 100-year celebration: Graham Armstrong, Andrew Crisp, Peter Alexander, Rachel Cooper and Barry Cooper. Congratulations Clunes Cricket Club; I look forward to the celebrations later this year.

I'd like to recognise Allan Hayman from Junction Hill. He has been awarded a Public Service Medal for 40 years of service to the New South Wales government. He started at 14 when he helped build a local public school. He then became a trainee engineman. He married his wife, Lyn, in 1975, and in 1976 he started a job at the Department of Main Roads. He then became an assistant storeman. He considered retiring, but took up a job as a crossing supervisor on Turf Street at St Mary's Primary School. He has been a familiar face for a whole generation of students. This award is usually presented by the Premier, but, due to COVID, the ceremony has been postponed. Congratulations Allan, and thank you for your service to our community.

Graphene Manufacturing Group

Mr DICK (Oxley) (11:29): I'm really pleased to see that businesses are moving forward and adapting new ways as they change their business models as a result of COVID-19. Small businesses and manufacturing businesses of the Oxley electorate are the backbone of our economy, and as a proud supporter of local small businesses, and having grown up in one myself, I'm really pleased to address the parliament today to advise the House of a wonderful local manufacturing group in the Oxley electorate, Graphene Manufacturing Group. I recently visited their headquarters, based in Sumner in the Oxley electorate, along with my hardworking state member, the member for Mount Ommaney, Ms Jess Pugh.

GMG, a cleantech manufacturing company, commenced in 2016. With international experiences in oil and gas, the company founder set an ambitious target of manufacturing graphene from Queensland natural gas—a bold attempt, as the original discovery of graphene came from slicing layers of graphite from mining. Graphene, discovered only in 2004, is the world's first two-dimensional material, made up of atomic layers of carbon. Graphene's discovery went on to win a Nobel Prize for physics in 2010 for two professors from the University of Manchester. Since the Nobel Prize there has been an explosion of research in this wonderful material, with over 10,000 academic papers.

GMG's main funding has predominantly come from private investors from Australia, Canada and Europe. Using predominantly overseas funding, they are based in Sumner Park. GMG is the self-proclaimed graphene gateway, and it's made an enormous impact across the academic and advanced manufacturing landscape in various countries around the world, especially in Australia. Whilst engaging with various world-leading international companies, GMG continues to financially support numerous Australian university research projects, including the QUT Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation; a partnership between the Royal Brisbane Hospital's Herston Biofabrication Institute and QUT; an ARC funded University of Queensland project to make aluminium ion batteries; and the ARC Linkage Program with the University of Queensland to make potassium and sodium ion batteries using Queensland agricultural waste from sorghum and macadamia nuts. In total, GMG is collaborating with over 11 local and international universities.

This is a world success story based in the south-west of Brisbane. I was so pleased to be able to sit down with the team based in Sumner to understand exactly what their company is providing: local jobs and clean new forms of energy to support a growing sector. I commend them to the House today.
Moncrieff Electorate: Volunteers

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (11:32): Volunteers have a strong presence throughout the Moncrieff electorate. Whether it's helping out with local sporting teams, responding to natural disasters and emergencies, or helping local charities support some of our most disadvantaged people, the most important of volunteers have never been more relevant than now as we work to meet the challenges presented by COVID-19. I commend the Morrison government's Volunteer Grants program, which recognises the valuable role volunteers play in building more resilient and cohesive communities, and supporting individual participation in community life. It supports the efforts of volunteers who are the backbone of our community. I'd like to highlight the projects that are taking in place and around Moncrieff.

Broadbeach Senior Citizens Club and Gold Coast Hungarian Association will both update their refrigerators so they can continue to host their wonderful community events. Broadbeach Meals on Wheels, Queensland Professional Athletics Club, and Gold Coast Disability Advocacy will receive funding to assist their volunteers with their transportation costs. Broadbeach United Soccer Club, Broadbeach Junior AFL Club and Gold Coast Regional Basketball will now be able to update their coaching accreditation. Nerang RSL Netball Club will purchase two new marquees with new equipment for their weekly barbecues. Gold Coast Baseball will receive new iPads for their umpires and additional protective equipment. Surfers Paradise Baseball Club will increase their safety capabilities, with volunteers taking a first aid course and CPR training. Gold Coast City Brass Band, one of my favourites, will build a percussion section and purchase more instruments. The Gold Coast Philharmonic Society will also enhance their musical capabilities by improving the mobility of their orchestra. Presence Church in Surfers Paradise will purchase a projector screen and microphone to facilitate volunteer training sessions. St John's Crisis Centre will train more volunteers. Rosie's Youth Mission will increase their volunteer capacity with background screening checks. Both organisations do an incredible job helping the homeless and around Moncrieff, which is so critical during this time. The Vietnam Veterans Federation, which I'll make special mention of, will purchase more safety equipment such as high-vis vests, a resuscitator kit and safety glasses for their Men's Shed in Nerang. I've been there a couple of times and bought all the honey they produce at the Nerang Men's Shed. I enjoy my trips out there to their organisation.

I'd like to extend my congratulations to all the successful organisations and thank them for the work that they do on the Gold Coast for our community. It's a very difficult time for very many Gold Coasters, and these community organisations are there helping those that need the extra help. Again I shout out to those at St John's Crisis Centre and Di Kozic. You're doing a great job. Keep up the good work. Thank you for helping our city.

Business

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (11:35): Supporting businesses is one of the most important things that the government has done during this coronavirus pandemic. But we need to make sure that the support that's been rolled out to business has actually been helping them, and we need to listen to them about what they need for the future. For this reason, I did the Perth Business Survey. I sent it to more than 12,000 businesses in my electorate to get their feedback on how they were surviving the coronavirus pandemic. I asked them about their biggest challenges and what they need from the federal government going forward so they can keep their doors open and keep their staff on the books.

The No. 1 concern of businesses in my electorate is low turnover. The second biggest concern is the removal of JobKeeper. Fifty-one per cent of businesses said that they were worried that JobKeeper was going to be removed, or that it wasn't going to be extended much as would be needed so that they could continue to keep their doors open and keep people in jobs. Today we are seeing more of the snapback approach, suggesting we are just going to push people onto a yet-to-be-determined level of the jobseeker payment. This is putting waves of uncertainty through our economy at the worst possible time.

What we saw today is that Western Australia now, sadly, has the highest unemployment anywhere in the nation, at 8.1 per cent.

A government member: Open the borders.

Mr GORMAN: I hear the interjection that we should open the borders. I don't know how anyone can suggest that putting the health of Western Australians at risk is the solution to economic challenges. It is incredibly clear that the health of Western Australia will be dealt with—

Government members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): Members on my right, order!

Mr GORMAN: And I think it is disgraceful that the Attorney-General has decided to join forces with Clive Palmer—Clive Palmer, of all people! They're going to the High Court together to tear down the Western
Australian border, putting the business interests of Clive Palmer—and I know that Clive Palmer employs a lot of
people for the Liberal National Party in Queensland—ahead of the health interests of Western Australians. It is
disgraceful!

But back to the businesses in my electorate: they had some very good, practical ideas about what should happen
for the businesses of Western Australia to continue to survive this terrible pandemic. They said we should bring
forward infrastructure and construction spending. Good idea! They said we should have more federal funding for
social housing. These are businesses saying they want to see more federal funding for social housing! They said
that we should properly fund arts organisations, not just now but into the future. They said we should do more to
promote local manufacturing capacity. And there were suggestions that we should put Western Australia forward
to be a renewable energy leader. They said: 'Be bold. Have ideas that actually grow our economy. Take advantage
of the goodwill that does come from Western Australia towards those who are trying to tackle this pandemic, but
the ridiculous suggestion— (Time expired)

Petrie Electorate: Queen's Birthday Honours

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (11:38): I'm honoured today to speak about the six very special constituents in the electorate of Petrie
who were honoured in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours list. On 8 June, the Governor-General announced the
2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list, recognising a total of 933 Australians, including with the Order of Australia.
I stand today to acknowledge and recognise all the impressive and distinguished Australians, especially those in
the Petrie electorate, who have been awarded with this honour this year. They include Mr Ricky Stephen AM, for
his significant service to the tourism and hospitality sector, particularly as a chef; and Mr Simon Patmore OAM,
for service to snowboarding as a gold medallist at the 2018 Pyeongchang Paralympic Winter Games. Fun fact:
Simon became the first Australian man to win a medal at both the summer and winter Paralympic Games. There's
not much snow in Carseldine, where he lives, but we're all very impressed with Simon's skills on the board.

Also honoured were Mr Robert Tait OAM, for service to aviation education; and Mr David Teufel OAM and
Mrs Robyn Teufel OAM, for their service to local youngsters through Scouts. Finally, Corporal Vikrant Vijayrao
Deokar received the Conspicuous Service Medal for meritorious devotion to duty as an information system
detachment commander within 511 Signal Troop, 1st Signal Regiment, during the period 2018 to 2019.

David and Robyn Teufel, both from Bald Hills, have been recognised for their service to local youth through
Scouts, as I mentioned. The pair have dedicated more than 50 years to Scouts and giving back to local children.
They are now also involved in looking after scouting history at Sandgate Scouts. David and Robyn want to
courage more locals to join the Scouts, and they say the organisation's longevity is testament to its success.
Established in 1908, Scouts proudly celebrated its centenary in 2008. David says he believes that scouting is as
relevant today as it was back then and that Scouts play an important role in developing children's leadership skills
and character.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to talk about Robert Tait of North Lakes, recognised for his service to
aviation education. Mr Tait is the owner of Bob Tait's Aviation Theory School, which has operated out of the
Redcliffe Aerodrome since 1981, and he has been teaching as a flight instructor since 1970.

I want to congratulate all the people who have won these awards. If you know someone who deserves
recognition, visit the Governor-General's website. Anyone can apply.

Illawarra Hawks

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (11:41): This morning, residents of the Illawarra woke to this screaming
headline from our local paper.

Mr Zimmerman interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): Order! Yes, I take the point of order.

Mr STEPHEN JONES: The rules in relation to props might apply, but the rules in relation to decency have
not applied when it comes to the National Basketball League's treatment of the Illawarra Hawks. The Illawarra
Hawks have a long, proud tradition as a community club. It's the only club with 41 continuous years playing in the
National Basketball League. It has a loyal fan base, a very loyal fan base. We have regularly provided players to
the national team, the Australian Boomers. It's been through scrapes. There've been years where we've run short of
cash. We probably wouldn't have got through to the end of the year and were uncertain about whether we'd
reregister next year, but the community have rallied around the club to ensure that it can continue for another year.

Yesterday the National Basketball League announced that it had sold the licence for the Illawarra Hawks, and a
condition of that sale was removing the name 'Illawarra' from the nameplate of the club. It's an egregious act of
corporate theft. Today I am launching a petition aimed at the NBL, demanding that they put the name back. The
The commission of the NBL think the logo is the team. They think the logo is the club. They think the club is interchangeable with the brand. Well, I've got a message for the commissioners of the National Basketball League: the brand is not the club. The club is its loyal fan base, the players, the people who've supported the club through thick and thin. If they think that a club is just a brand, I ask them to think about this: people don't queue up for hours to buy tickets to sit in a cold stadium to watch Coles head off against Woolworths. People don't go to the State of Origin to barrack for XXXX over Tooheys. They go there to barrack for their local team. It's about the local team. If the National Basketball League think we're going to stand for this, they've got another thing coming. Our petition demands that the National Basketball League put the Illawarra back into the Hawks.

Police and Emergency Services

Mrs MARINO (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (11:44): I've thanked many people from my south-west for what they've done to help keep the community safe during the COVID crisis. Today I want to mention the St John Ambulance people and our fire and emergency services—all the volunteer organisations as well as the professional organisations—that were still on the front line throughout this process. The St John Ambulance people still had to go out and attend people and save lives and help our communities face to face when a lot of us were at home because we were being told to isolate and stay away from other people. They were still on the front line, having to do the job to look after us all. So I want to thank our St John Ambulance people, our fire and emergency services as well, and those in the rescue space. We cannot function, particularly in rural and regional communities, without these amazing volunteers. To see them out there in spite of the shutdown and the lockdown, still doing their job, still providing those very core emergency services, was extraordinary. Today I also want to make a special mention of our local police. I've been seriously disturbed by some of the images that I've seen of attacks on our police. Irrespective of what people's views are about so much, I can say that our local police are critical to our local communities. I know personally what they have to deal with. They have to be very special people to do the job that we ask them to do day in and day out. They put their lives at risk every single day, and they do it just to make sure that we stay out of harm's way. Irrespective of what your problem is, especially when you live in small regional and rural communities, it's your local police that you know are there to watch your back. That's the first phone call you make. I cannot thank them enough—my south-west police, every police officer that's out there, and even our AFP officers—for the work that they do. I've said to them how much I value and respect the work they do for us every day.

These are the people who stand between us and those who would do us harm in our community. It can come in many different ways. I know personally, from my conversations with them and seeing some of the injuries that they've sustained over time, what they have to deal with and what this does to them and their families. So in this place I want to make sure that those police officers know that they have our support and that we understand and respect and value what they do every single day and how they stand between us and whatever harm is sought to be done to us every single day. We can rely on them to help to keep each and every community safe. So thank you to every police officer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 193 the time for constituency statements has concluded.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (11:47): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

Racism

Mr GILES (Scullin) (11:47): Four years ago this week the British Labour MP Jo Cox was murdered. She was murdered doing her job, which is of course our job—representing people in parliament—by an extremist right-wing terrorist. This parliament came together then to remember her. I'm proud of how we did this and of the contributions to this debate across all sides and the shared sense of solidarity of grief and of purpose. We must still remember her and think of those that she left behind. Today I'm remembering her: someone who I never met but who has greatly influenced me and my work, whose work and legacy continues to inspire. Today I still have the great privilege to serve the people of Scullin and the Australian Labor Party in this place and to have the capacity to make a difference. More profoundly, tomorrow I'll get home to Melbourne and spend time with my family, with netball, soccer, shared meals, birthday planning. I'm thinking about what's happened in the last four years in my family, joys so cruelly denied to Jo. This weighs on my mind as I think about how we can do more and do better to honour her values and her example through our action and our conduct.
She said, 'We have more in common than that which divides us.' She was right. The way in which our communities have come together through this pandemic has shown us this. It is something recognised by Brendan Cox, Jo's inspirational husband, as he continues to call for us to think about how we relate to one another. That is not to suggest that we don't have differences or shouldn't disagree with each other—of course we should—it's about trying to recognise that these differences and disagreements shouldn't define us. He's right, too. This is how we must proceed, to democratically find our way through this crisis and to recover as a stronger and more cohesive community; stronger together, and kinder too. Let's recognise the strength of community sentiment calling for a different politics, and let's work on managing our differences differently. We could all listen more and we could all think before we speak, think about the consequences of our words: whether they advance debate, whether they include, or whether they divide.

From this perspective I'd like to touch on three things which were important to Jo Cox and are important to me: refugees, fighting racism, and loneliness. All of these are assuming greater significance through the pandemic. This week it's Refugee Week. We should acknowledge this in this place. Jo Cox was a champion of refugees and sought to work in a bipartisan way in her parliament to advance the cause of helping the world's most vulnerable. Here, the politics of this debate have been too toxic for too long. We can change this. The policy challenges here are complex, diabolically so. But there is no reason why resolving these should be driven by so divisive a politics. Now, as we reconsider—because we're forced to—restarting our immigration program more generally, can we try to turn this around? I'm not asking government members to change their minds—not now, anyway!—but rather to consider changing their tone to focus on our common humanity and what this should mean, not the lowest common denominator; to think about people in our communities now who are destitute, relying on food banks, and terrified people in camps around the world like those in Cox's Bazar.

Jo fought racism, and so should we all. Racism is now on the rise, and so too is right-wing extremism. We must be forthright and consistent in supporting hope, not hate, and unity over fear. Multiculturalism is modern Australia's greatest achievement, but we can't take it for granted. While the crisis has brought people together, there are forces that seek to divide and to diminish. We must confront and defeat these, as this parliament has sought to do in these settings with bipartisan motions.

A large part of Jo Cox's legacy is the work that's being done in her name to raise awareness of loneliness and respond to that crisis. The experience of lockdown has forced all of us to reconsider the importance of our relationships—of everyone's relationships. A good society is a connected society in which people aren't isolated from those around them and where people look out for each other. We've seen so much of this in recent weeks, but this can't stop when social distancing requirements do. We must commit to ending loneliness.

In concluding, I want to direct some remarks to those who are most important here. To Jo Cox's family: we're thinking of you, as we think of her. Of course, we can't and don't presume to understand your loss. But, on the other side of the world, we remember Jo Cox and seek to follow her example.

**Melbourne Airport Rail Link**

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (11:52): The Melbourne Airport rail link project, which is currently on the books and currently has $5 billion worth of federal government money, has the potential to become a fantastic generational project. This project could ensure that the Melbourne rail system keeps pace with the incredible growth of Melbourne's west. By 2036, the City of Wyndham will be over 450,000 people, Melton will be over 330,000 people, and Sunbury will also be over 300,000. If this Melbourne Airport rail link project is built properly, it will also have incredible benefits for Shepparton and Wangaratta, on the north-east line, and Albury-Wodonga through the Shepparton line. They will be incredible beneficiaries of this project. Not only will these cities have a direct access into Melbourne; they'll also be directly linked to the airport, which is going to have incredible tourism benefits for the greater part of northern Victoria.

The state Labor government in Victoria have a responsibility to build this project for the whole state. Premier Andrews is on record as saying that this project will not just be about getting people to and from the airport; it'll be a project for the whole state. Jacinta Allan has also spoken about the benefits that this project will bring to the whole state. However, right now, they're going to turn their backs on the people in the west and the people in northern Victoria, right through to Albury-Wodonga and beyond. These people are being left behind by the state Labor government.

Right now, if you want to catch a train out of Bendigo, you have one out of 23 chances to get into Melbourne every day. Out of Ballarat there are 24 services per day, Geelong has 56 and Shepparton and the greater region around Shepparton, which services about the same population as Bendigo, has five services per day. It is an absolute disgrace that the state Labor government has simply forgotten about the people in the north. The north-
east line, going through Benalla, Wangaratta and Albury-Wodonga, is commonly referred to as the worst line in Victoria.

The state government have an opportunity to build this project, using federal government money—to make it a generational project—but they are claiming that they can't do this properly because of the cost blow-out. Recently I have been talking about this with some experts that work day in, day out in major tunneling projects, train development projects—there are a lot of these projects going on around Australia right now—and they have said that they cannot see how the Melbourne Airport rail link project, which has six to seven kilometres of tunnel, two station upgrades, one new station, and 21 kilometres of at-grade, could possibly go past $12 billion. There's currently $17 billion on the table, because an Australian super fund also wants to invest along with the federal and state government's money.

When you compare the MARL project with the Sydney Metro West project, we see that the Sydney Metro West project is $20 billion and there is four times the amount of tunneling. The Victorian government is claiming that a project that has four times the amount of tunneling and eight new stations is going to cost the same as the Melbourne project. The Sydney Metro City and Southwest Sydney project, at $16.8 billion, has 15 kilometres of tunneling and seven new stations—and they are claiming this is going to come in cheaper than their project.

It is incredible that the Victorian government are so brazen as to not only hurt the people in the north of the state—which they have made an Olympic sport out of—but also, in this case, burn the people of the west. They're going to burn the people of Ballarat, Melton, Sunbury, Werribee and all through the western suburbs. These are areas of incredible growth. When the Melbourne Metro 1 is completed in 2026, it's going to be at capacity. What they are going to do when all of those services are at capacity in 2026 is run six services per hour out to the airport and say, 'We have now delivered Melbourne Airport rail.' It's going to be an absolute shemozzle for the people in the west who have already got their services running at capacity. So they will take away six to eight services per hour and say, 'We have delivered Melbourne Airport rail.' It will probably cost around $4 billion to build this Melbourne Airport rail without a tunnel. So they're going to use $10 billion, supposedly, to do a $4 billion project.

Global Security

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (12:46): I draw to the attention of this House that, in the last 24 hours, the Ukrainian secret service has undertaken raids on a neo-Nazi group, or a cell, that operates in that country, discovering guns, explosives, ammunition and a range of material that included a translation of the Christchurch shooter, Brenton Tarrant's, 74-page manifesto. It was a very extensive operation. A statement by the secret service said that 'the group was headed by a Russian and shared extremist literature online, at secret meetings and theme parties as well as with up to 3,000 people via secret groups on the messaging platform Telegram and social media networks. The statement—which appeared online through the Sydney Morning Herald in the last half-hour—continued:

During the searches of the leader's residence and clandestine print works, the law enforcement seized more than 300 copies of Nazi editions, the Third Reich flags, arms and ammo, explosive devices, computers administering the closed communities and receipts with confirmations of literature deliveries from abroad.

So it is a fairly serious operation. What these groups have demonstrated continually is the fact that they are very organised, they are widespread, they are working closely together, and they're using the internet to spread hate speech but, importantly, inspire action.

The Global Terrorism Index of 2019 discovered a 320 per cent increase in right-wing extremism over five years. In Australia, we've seen people approach mosques with machetes. We've seen racist tropes linked to genocide being graffitied on the walls of places of worship. We've seen instances of anti-Semitism played out in the community. We've seen swastika flags being flown out of residential homes. In February this year, after much urging, ASIO finally recognised this growth. ASIO, through the course of the coronavirus, indicated that there has been a massive leap in online activity. In fact, the number of domestic ASIO investigations into far-right individuals is second only to Sunni extremists.

When this was raised earlier this year, we had some really bizarre responses. The Minister for Home Affairs, in responding to ASIO's revised threat assessment back in February, started to equate left-wing terrorism with Islamist groups and argued that he was after left-wing and right-wing groups. We know what needs to be done to tackle Islamist terrorism. We need more of an effort by the government on right-wing extremism. We saw the reaction from some members of the Right in the coalition in the Senate, like Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, who confronted ASIO's director-general, saying:

'Right' is associated with conservatism in this country, and there are many people of conservative background who take exception to being tarred with the same brush.

... ...
So I think the time has come, Director-General, especially from you, to ensure that you are very careful with the terminology that you use, so that ordinary Australians, particularly those of conservative background, are not offended.

Senator Stoker, the chair of the committee, then thought she had struck a great vein in arguing that far-right extremism groups hadn't been prescribed because they weren't operating on foreign soil. That is despite the fact that it doesn't matter whether or not you operate on Australian soil; you can be prescribed if you're urging acts of violence, as these groups are.

I want to know not only why the government isn't taking this seriously but why the chairman of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security is not taking this seriously either. He has not called for anything to be done on this issue. There is no study being done by his committee. There is no action being taken. In 2015, he was quite vocal in calling on Muslims to call out what he called 'Islamic terrorism' and saying that we should use 'clear, concise and strong language' to condemn it. I am arguing the same thing. I don't care if it is an Islamist or a right-wing extremist: if they are threatening the lives of Australians, it should take it seriously. The PJCIS should be investigating this. It should be given the remit to look at what right-wing extremist activity is happening in this country and what actions should be taken to tackle it.

COVID-19: Economy

Mr Simmonds (Ryan) (12:02): This government is a jobs government. It's always been our focus, and it's taken on even greater importance since the efforts to suppress COVID-19. Prior to COVID-19, more than 1.5 million jobs had been created right across the country by this government. Female participation had risen, and the gender pay gap had fallen to record lows. We promised that we would create jobs and we did. Then COVID-19 hit, and as a result so much has had to change so very quickly. But we are an incredible country. We are resilient, and we banded together as a nation, and it's the efforts of everyday Australians that have ensured we have suppressed COVID-19. Most importantly, it is through the efforts of every Australian working together that we will recover. The most important part of Australia's economic recovery is getting Australians back into jobs. Our balanced budget and strong economic position meant that this government could act decisively and swiftly to implement the jobseeker and JobKeeper programs to give Australians the helping hand they needed in these unprecedented times. But now the greatest challenge is the road to recovery: restoring and creating jobs. We've done it before, and we will do it again.

The JobMaker plan recently announced by the Prime Minister details a new plan for economic success, backing business, backing our highly competitive industries and reforming the skills sector. One of the core principles of our government has always been to ensure Australians have the right skills to fit the workplace of today and tomorrow. We know that vocational education and training reform is vital, and that's why it's a core part of our JobMaker plan.

The government has recently moved to establish a new statutory position, the National Skills Commissioner. This new position, working with the National Skills Commission, will help prepare our labour market for recovery by strengthening the education and training sector. We know that, given the scale of the challenge we are facing, our system is not fit for purpose. That's why we are moving quickly to make the system better. That's what good governments do. They constantly look to improve how we do things in a changing environment. Not only does this mean that we need to get better outcomes for the industry and for those looking to enter the skilled workforce; we need to provide more transparency and value for money for the taxpayer.

I don't think it is possible to find a more determined or fierce advocate for vocational education and training in this country than Minister Cash. Her passion for removing any perceived stigma that a trade or a skilled based career is a second-best option is outstanding. She couldn't be more right. I support her wholeheartedly in this endeavour, and I intend to ensure that my own son, along with every other young person in my electorate of Ryan, gives equal billing and consideration to a trade or skills based career when weighed against a university degree. We on this side of the House are working to make sure that Australians striving for a skills based career are rightly given the opportunities, the jobs and the recognition that they deserve. It is their hard work that will pull our economy back up by its bootstraps. Alongside the Prime Minister, Minister Cash is working on ensuring that we have a system that can deliver the skills that are actually in demand by industry. Industry is the creator of jobs, and our education and training sector must be responsive and deliver the skills that the industry needs.

The appointment of the National Skills Commissioner will mean that there is an authoritative and accurate source of information for students to see where the jobs of the future will be and what skills they will need to be able to access those jobs. Importantly, the appointment of this position is not only vital; it's incredibly timely. As COVID-19 has shown us, the economy and industries will evolve—that is, the jobs that will be made as we come out of the crisis may not be the same as the jobs that were lost. That's why our VET reform will take skills training
to new levels of responsiveness as the commissioner and the commission can flag emerging skills shortages and upcoming trends.

This government is absolutely dedicated to jobs. We won't be distracted by those on the other side of the chamber who seek to take away jobs and seek to destroy industries. We will be focused on making sure that we continue to create jobs for Australians and get them back into work. Right now, our industry and businesses are hurting, particularly in Queensland where a Labor state Premier refuses to open the borders despite there being no medical advice that it's required. What we could do very quickly is help create jobs in Queensland by reopening the border, as we are doing in Canberra to create jobs.

COVID-19: Economy

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (12:08): They are very good at media releases over on that side and not so good on substance. They do not have a plan for our economy and they don't have a plan to support Australians. Australians saw the true form and the true colour of our Prime Minister after the bushfires. He left Australians behind during the bushfires. He had other things he had do and he left Australians behind. He certainly had other things that he had to do during the bushfires, but, worst of all, after walking through the towns and even after he was heckled during the bushfires, the Prime Minister promised support, and what did we get? We got overpromise and underdelivery. People are still waiting for support in those bushfire affected areas. There was the election commitment to build a hundred dams. How many of the hundred do you reckon they've built? I don't even have to take off my shoes and socks to count. Zero. They don't have a plan for the economy and they are leaving Australians behind.

Today, we've seen unemployment figures hit over seven per cent, which is obviously devastating for anyone in this country who has lost their job. I don't think there would be any member on any side of the House who would celebrate any job losses in this country, but it really goes to show: what are the government doing to support people out of this economic downturn? The front page of the Australian Financial Review today said it all: they are going to let Australian businesses simply disappear after the September end of JobKeeper and then they'll be moving people over to Jobseeker. What the rate of Jobseeker will be, who knows? But it says a lot about this government: they are not going to fight for the jobs and they are not going to support Australian businesses. It affects millions of Australians—not six million, like they originally said, but 3½ million, revised down in the biggest financial blunder in the country's history. They are going to leave businesses behind in the economic aftermath of the JobKeeper subsidy.

In my electorate of Macnamara, we have some of the hardest-hit places. Elwood, St Kilda, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, Southbank and Windsor are all places that are deeply affected by the coronavirus recession. They are deeply affected by the economic inaction by this government in leaving artists behind, leaving entertainers behind and leaving casual workers behind. They haven't been supporting people in the retail industry for years. We've had vacant shops on high streets across the country for years, and this government have no plan. They are going to leave businesses behind.

If you look at some of the things that they have announced, it doesn't take long to see why this government are going to drive the Australian economy off a cliff without any safety raft whatsoever. Let's take the HomeBuilder program. When I saw the original reporting after the leaks from the government had gone into the papers about how they were going to give $25,000 to Australians for renovations, I thought, 'You know what; that's a pretty good thing,' because the Master Builders Association said that over 70 per cent of their residential construction companies are worried about the forward pipeline of work. The construction industry in Victoria, especially for residential construction, is on its knees. What is the big plan from the Minister for Housing and the Prime Minister? Well, it's to give $25,000 for renovations that are going to cost at least $150,000, for people who earn a certain amount but not too much. I'm not the best mathematician in this place. I'm sure others could claim—

Dr Aly: I am!

Mr BURNS: The member for Cowan claims that she's better at maths than me, which I would probably submit to. Seven thousand renovations mean, roughly, 47 per electorate. That means that 47 people in each electorate are going to get this home renovation support while 99,953 won't—this is why the member for Cowan is here! This is not an economic support program that's going to revive the important jobs in the construction industry. This is a joke. It's a reflection of the fact that the government do not have the economic plan to stimulate the economy. They are going to leave businesses behind, they are going to leave Australians behind, they are going to watch businesses dissolve, and they have no plan to support Australians after they remove JobKeeper in September.
Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (12:13): Today’s an important day for all those who care about the preservation and conservation of the Sydney Harbour foreshore, including in my own electorate of Wentworth. Today, the Minister for the Environment and member for Farrer released the independent review of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. The Sydney Harbor Federation Trust was established under the Howard government by an act of parliament in 2001 to ensure that former defence and Commonwealth lands occupying iconic sites on the Sydney Harbour foreshore remained public lands and were revitalised for public access. At the time, it was an enlightened and innovative public policy. The sites included the Macquarie Lighthouse at Vaucluse and the Marine Biological Station at Watsons Bay, both in my electorate of Wentworth, but also the sites at North Head, Middle Head, the former submarine base of Platypus at Neutral Bay, and Cockatoo Island.

I served on the board of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust from 2018 to 2019 and I saw firsthand the dedication and the professionalism of the staff and the amazing work that they have done to rehabilitate and activate such sites, turning them into treasures loved by Sydneysiders and, indeed, loved by people around the world. Last year, 1. 8 million people visited Sydney Harbour Federation Trust sites. I wish to commend the work of the CEO of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Mary Darwell, and all the staff of the trust, and also the board, led by Joseph Carrozzi. The review commissioned in October 2019 by the minister received over 200 submissions and held consultations with over 500 people at multiple public forums. The review makes a number of important recommendations—21 in all. There are some highlights that I think are worth drawing to the attention of the House. Firstly, the review recommends that amendments be made to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001 to remove the 2033 repeal provision. The review also recommends the development of an asset audit and masterplan for Cockatoo Island; greater recognition of Indigenous sites; increased focus on the military heritage, which is especially important for Cockatoo Island; and improved volunteer engagement.

I was pleased to hear the minister announce earlier today that the government broadly supports the recommendations of the review. The review notes that community consultation made clear that the public wants these lands to remain protected and in public hands under Commonwealth management. This is an affirmation of the success of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust model. The minister's announcement that we will shortly introduce legislation to amend the act and remove its expiry provision means that the lands held by the trust will remain in Commonwealth hands, open and accessible to the public, for future generations. These amendments will also give the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust the certainty to plan for the future, including the significant investments that need to be made in rehabilitating some of these assets.

There was, unfortunately, a scare campaign of misinformation that went around at the time of this review, suggesting that these sites might be privatised or developed or turned into hotels and universities. Regrettably, these misinformation campaigns were pushed by some members of this House, including the member for Warringah. But as the trust chair, Joseph Carrozzi, said at the time, such suggestions were simply misguided. They were a red herring designed to scare and confuse the public. As the review and its recommendations and the minister's own announcement today make clear, we have no intent or desire to do any such thing. In fact the main purpose of this review is to give certainty and clarity about the status of these lands and to ensure that they remain in public hands, in Commonwealth hands in perpetuity.

The review also identifies the need for urgent maintenance funding for some of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust’s assets. The minister today has announced $9 million of unlocked initial funding for maintenance and restoration work. This will go to things such as safety upgrades, sea wall and building repairs and the restoration of historic industrial cranes on Cockatoo Island. Members might be aware that Cockatoo Island was the home of shipbuilding and refurbishment activity in the Second World War and before and was vital part of our war effort during that conflict.

Finally, I wish to commend the review team, led by Ms Carolyn McNally and Ms Erin Flaherty. They undertook a most dedicated look at the trust and the unique portfolio of assets that it holds, and they did this in a way that was unprecedented. I look forward to the minister introducing legislation into the House that will allow us to amend the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001 and ensure that these unique and precious sites are preserved and accessible for generations to come.

HomeBuilder

Dr ALY (Cowan) (12:17): I want to use my time today to talk about the government’s HomeBuilder scheme. I appreciate the sentiment of this HomeBuilder scheme. We really do need to intervene in order to create jobs, particularly for tradies, and to help keep the economy going. But I would urge the government to consider the value and indeed, the relevance of this scheme for the people who I represent, the people of Cowan. Families in Perth’s northern suburbs were already suffering from mortgage stress and high unemployment even before
COVID-19. In fact, in August 2019 WA surpassed the rest of Australia in mortgage stress. This was made worse by stagnant wages and insecurity in employment. In the northern suburbs of Perth, and indeed across Western Australia, house prices have been falling. They have been falling since the end of the mining construction boom. It's taking them a long time to recover. Homes in suburbs in Cowan were already overcapitalised. And while a $150,000-dollar renovation might be the average on, say, a $1 million property in the inner suburbs of Sydney or of Melbourne, it is certainly not true for Cowan and for homes in the outer suburbs of Perth. To ask people to have a handy $150,000 to devote to renovations in order to qualify for a $25,000 grant towards those renovations is, quite frankly, ridiculous. I really cannot fathom the logic in this, particularly when you add to that the other conditions, the conditions of having less than $125,000 salary as a single and a home that is valued at less than $750,000. Nobody is going to take the risk of overcapitalising on a home by spending $150,000 on renovations, even if they meet all the other criteria, to take that risk on overcapitalising on a home where they are never going to recoup that value, especially if they face unemployment or insecure employment and especially not in a recession.

The intent of this scheme, we're told, is to stimulate employment for tradies. Again, I appreciate that sentiment. But I ask: what good is a scheme that people can't access to both the home owner and the people for whom it's meant to create employment, the tradies? Today's Australian Financial Review reported that Australia's population growth would shrink, leading to a dramatic decrease in the demand for housing, with approximately 80,000 fewer houses needing to be built, reduced demand for rental properties and increased risks around residential property. So it seems to me that now more than ever we need a housing stimulus package that protects jobs now. Frankly, HomeBuilder isn't going to do that, particularly considering the forecasts outlined today in the Australian Financial Review.

As of today, there have been zero—zero!—applications for the HomeBuilder scheme, because the government hasn't put in place any way for people to submit their applications, despite the very short time frame that's attached to the scheme. The scheme is meant to be stimulating the economy now and generating jobs in the industry now, but it's not doing that, because the closest that people can get to applying is to provide their email addresses on a website so they can receive updates when more information is available. Time is critical.

There are people in Cowan who need help right now, and this scheme just isn't helping them. Max is 86 years old. He lives in Wanneroo. He called my office to learn more about the scheme because he wants to do some home renovations. He's in a wheelchair, and his home has damage along the walls where he's tried to navigate around the house and the wheelchair has scraped the walls. He was hoping that he would finally be able to get the repairs he needs done, but he's been filled with disappointment. This scheme reflects the out-of-touch priorities of the government. Once again I urge the government to consider the value of the scheme for the people whom it's meant to help.

Child Sexual Abuse

Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (12:22): No group in our community is more deserving of our protection than our children. I have spoken before in the House about my own history, and as a parent with five children of my own I feel very strongly about protecting children from harm. Yet for all the noise and grandstanding on a range of issues from that side, I cannot for the life of me understand why it took three years, coupled with a major public relations disaster on Tuesday, for Labor to finally come to its senses and support the introduction of mandatory minimum sentences for Commonwealth child sex offenders.

We see almost daily reports of sexual crimes against children, but I think the recent case in New South Wales sent shock waves through us all. One of the country's largest child sex rings was exposed, with two men accused of horrific actions that I don't wish to repeat here today. At least 14 children have been removed from harmful situations, and a total of 40 charges have been laid. It's important to note that this story is not uncommon. Those who commit these crimes are not the shadowy monster lurking in the corner; this is a very common misconception. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal safety report in 2005, of all those who reported having been victimised sexually before the age of 15 years, just 11.1 per cent were victimised by a stranger. The rest were known to the victim, with over 30 per cent reporting that it was perpetrated by a male relative.

You would think that the rights of children in situations such as this would be an absolute no-brainer for Labor, who, despite claiming to oppose mandatory sentencing on principle, introduced mandatory sentences for people smugglers after losing control of Australia's borders when it was last in government. Their hypocrisy was laid bare on Monday night, when Labor senators voted down the mandatory sentencing component of a broader sentencing reform bill that was first introduced by the government back in 2017. If it's okay for people smugglers to face mandatory jail, why is it not okay for child sex predators to face the same fate? It was only after a furious public backlash on Tuesday morning that Labor finally agreed to pass the government's bill in its entirety.
Last year, 39 per cent of convicted Commonwealth child sex offenders did not spend a single day in jail. This is not an anomaly. In the last five years, approximately 40 per cent of Commonwealth child sex offenders were not sentenced to spend a single day in prison. Needless to say, it is extremely disappointing that those on the other side fought for so long to stop the laws passing the parliament. Of all the issues and rights you could fight for, many of them noble, those who commit sex offences against children do not deserve your advocacy.

I'm incredibly proud of our government's efforts to continue to fight for the rights to protect children. This new bill will vastly improve justice outcomes and community safety through mandatory minimum sentencing for serious child sex offences and for recidivist offenders; a presumption against bail for serious and repeat offenders to keep them off the streets; increased maximum penalties across the spectrum of child sex offences, including up to life imprisonment for the most serious offences; presumptions in favour of cumulative sentences and actual imprisonment; ensuring that sex offenders, upon release from custody, are adequately supervised and subject to appropriate rehabilitative conditions; and preventing courts from discounting sentences on the basis of good character where this is used to facilitate the crime.

I'd like to point out that while not all mandatory minimum sentencing schemes are the same, there is no doubt that mandatory minimum sentences can be effective in responding to particular issues. Additionally, this view of mandatory sentencing is supported by the Australian Institute of Criminology, which concluded in its research paper on mandatory sentencing that such sentences may result in a reduction of crime. Sentencing an abuser does not take away the pain a child has suffered; the mental anguish is undoubtedly lifelong. However, by imposing mandatory sentencing, it sends the message that what happened to a child matters. How can a survivor feel any sense of justice in the world when their offender did not spend a single day in prison for their actions? As those who represent our communities, it is our duty of care to protect our most vulnerable where we have the ability to do so. This bill sends a clear and necessary message that child sexual abuse will never be tolerated.

**Racism**

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (12:27): It seems like last drinks for a West Aussie small business. This isn't the first time I've spoken about beer in this place, and I sincerely hope it won't be the last, but this time it is much more serious.

In the last few days, we've seen a well-meaning movement go from worthwhile and important political statements and impactful action to what others call political correctness gone mad and, more importantly, action that ultimately distracts from and undermines its otherwise very important aims.

A bottle shop chain in Victoria has taken Colonial beer off its shelves in a stand of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. The brewery in Margaret River was named due to the fact they were colonising the previously exclusive wine region with a brewery about 16 years ago. There was no malice attached to the name when the little brewery set up, nor when it went national in 2015. But now the colonial brewery has been tarred with the same brush as monuments to racist historical figures because of particular imputations of meaning to its name. Now the brewery is taking steps to review its name and branding in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement—something that, if they follow through with it, will bring with it massive costs in rebranding. But they are to be commended for the consideration they're taking.

This could be a good outcome for a seemingly ridiculous situation—a situation that has gained national media attention. But do you know what hasn't gained the same level of public recognition? The fact that my colleague Senator McCarthy stood up in the other place yesterday and read out the names of First Nations people who have died in custody—the names of real people with lives and families whose lives were taken, often for reasons that remain unknown. What we have seen in the last few weeks around the world, and particularly in my home state of Western Australia, has been an incredible movement towards the fact that things should not remain the same. There is no place for discrimination and division in this country and, increasingly so, in this world. But we need action. There is a mood for change, and we must grasp it. We need serious focus at a federal and state level on what we can do to close the Indigenous justice gap—a focus on what we can do to reduce Indigenous incarceration, a focus on what we can do to end deaths in custody.

The Western Australian state government has made positive steps towards that, only just this week. On Tuesday, WA law was amended to end the automatic imprisonment of people for unpaid fines. This is something that I and many others within WA Labor have been working towards for many years now, and that have been already eradicated around the rest of the country. This was an unjust law that saw so many individuals locked up for measly fines, often totalling no more than a couple of thousand dollars, if that. It was a law that disproportionately affected single and Indigenous women, a law that resulted in the lost lives of many, including Ms Dhu in 2014 and Cally Graham in 2017. Both families have worked to push for this change for years. Now, only a magistrate can send a fine defaulter to jail and only as a last resort.
Now there is this movement, this momentum, which will see us capable of achieving so much more, for it's not the incarceration that killed these women; it's the preconceived judgement, the prejudice, the distrust of their character that meant that these women did not receive the help they needed when they needed it. Now we must eradicate this discrimination and division. We must replace it with empathy, respect, understanding and, dare I say it, some reconciliation.

We've said sorry as a nation, but that was in 2008. What have we got to show for it? An outdated Closing the gap report where most targets were not even close to being met, and that bewilderingly has never included what has been obviously missing—a justice target. A series of well-crafted and well-meaning speeches from politicians over the years hasn't fixed it, and my speech here today won't do that either. But what can be the catalyst for real change is the present movement from the wider Australian population, indeed the global movement, for Black Lives Matter, because, if enough people lend their voices to the cause, those in government, those in authority and those everyday people walking down the street will be forced to listen and think twice to act. So let's not get distracted by the name on the side of a beer can. Let's focus on these real lives and what we can do to make them better, because improving anyone's life, acknowledging in practice that black lives matter, improves all of our lives and our nation.

Moore Electorate: Economy

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (12:32): As we enter the recovery phase following the coronavirus crisis, my vision for greater Joondalup is to see our community, located in the northern suburbs of Perth, grow into a more vibrant regional city, with a thriving local economy and amenity for residents through strong federal investment in health, education, infrastructure and telecommunications. Since being elected to government in 2013, our community is undergoing transformation.

The population of the City of Joondalup is projected to grow from 163,000 residents currently to a population of 190,000 by 2050. In our city centre, there are many vacant sites suitable for medium density, mixed use, commercial and residential development to support this growth. Construction activity remains strong, with the value of residential building permits approved in the past financial year amounting to $223 million, while the value of commercial building permits approved during the same period totalled $158 million. By adopting a more pro-development stance at all levels of government more construction projects will be approved through the planning process, providing a steady source of work for local builders, subcontractors and tradespersons, keeping our workforce in employment for many years to come. The future prosperity of our city depends on development.

One of the hallmarks of our city is accessibility and connectivity, provided by the Northern Suburbs Railway and an efficient road network linking our suburbs with other key centres of employment and amenity. Joondalup has the potential to service surges in population and offers strong regional employment opportunities in the health, education, infrastructure and telecommunications. Since being elected to government in 2013, our community is undergoing transformation.

Linking Whitfords Avenue with a realigned Gnangara Road will improve access to employment and services in the Wangara industrial and commercial area for local commuters. This critical east–west route through the heartland of the Moore electorate will complement other key links between the Joondalup and Wanneroo communities currently under construction at Joondalup Drive and Ocean Reef Road. It is a project which requires the joint cooperation of the City of Wanneroo and Main Roads WA. Local landowners have plans to invest in the construction of new commercial buildings along the realigned Gnangara Road frontage, with national tenants ready to establish stores creating local jobs.

Currently, the main employment sectors in Joondalup are retail, health, education and tourism. The workforce in the City of Joondalup is currently estimated at 91,525 workers, of which 46,042 are local residents. In fact, 51 per cent of the Joondalup residential population lives and works in the local area, with 58.4 per cent of local residents working full-time. An estimated 13,201 businesses operate within the City of Joondalup, generating gross regional product of $6.48 billion. The largest industry in the City of Joondalup is healthcare and social assistance, representing the largest local employer with 10,949 jobs, or 17.8 per cent of the workforce. This is followed by education and training in second place at 14.6 per cent of the workforce, and retail trade, our third-largest source of employment, at 10.7 per cent.

I'm working with the local business community to implement a comprehensive destination marketing strategy to promote Joondalup to interstate and international visitors to boost our local economy. Last financial year, there were over 2.7 million visitors to the City of Joondalup, with a total of $766.4 million in visitor spending. Only 5.48 per cent of total tourists into Perth visit the Joondalup region, and 48.9 per cent of tourists visiting Joondalup are international visitors staying overnight. Together, federal, state and local governments have a role to play in the promotion of Joondalup as a destination.
Pensions and Benefits

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (12:37): Australian workers and people living in this country should be very proud of what Australia puts forward as our social safety net. It is a safety net borne out of a Labor legacy, through the leadership of the Fisher Labor government, with the age pension, and, of course, in 1944, the bringing in of social security and unemployment payments. Perhaps Australia's war experience, and the very fact that these were borne out of difficult times, makes this an even more important part of our story. We do understand the randomness of misfortune. As Australia transitioned to peacetime after World War II, Australians sought to re-enter the workforce. We understood that the loss of a job and being unable to find one can often be beyond an individual's control. Three-quarters of a century later, and recent events have again reminded us of this important randomness. We are reminded of the importance of a social security system. In a matter of weeks—in fact, about 100 days—millions of Australians lost their jobs and were unable to work. People in this chamber and the other one would know of such people amongst their friends or in their families and social networks. The base rate of the jobseeker payment was inadequate before the pandemic, and it will remain inadequate after it unless the government acts to permanently increase it. Labor has been calling for an increase for some time, as have business, civil society groups and many experts, including people who are ex-Treasury officials. The government's introduction of a coronavirus supplement was an implicit acknowledgement by the government that the rate of the jobseeker payment is way too low—something we, along with organisations like ACOSS, have been saying for a long time.

Almost two million Australians are now receiving unemployment support, many more than what was anticipated—remarkably—by this government. The base rate of the jobseeker payment is so low that it presents a barrier to finding employment. I remind people that it was something like $550 a fortnight. Even members of the government had been putting forward very forcefully that the rate was too low. Many on this payment are unable to afford internet bills, transport costs or clothing. The payment was acting as a barrier to finding employment, yet that was the very reason it was put in place. Essentially, people looking for work or attending job interviews found it almost impossible, and navigating the system was just as difficult. We do not want to see people in this country forced into impossible choices between paying for food, rent, clothes, medical supplies, children or utility costs. We do not want to see vulnerable Australians trapped in the endless cycle of poverty because they are forced to make these impossible decisions.

Another core function of our social safety net is to stabilise our economy during periods of weak growth. An increase to the jobseeker payment would provide a much-needed boost to the economy. Snapping back the jobseeker and JobKeeper programs will be a disaster for the economy and will prove extremely difficult for the Australian economy at a time when we all want the economy to go forward and make enormous adjustments. Income support recipients are more likely to spend and less likely to save. We know that. This means more money is spent on local businesses and in the local economy—shops, corner stores, supermarkets, petrol stations and many other places. It means local businesses will have more money to spend on wages and jobs.

We look forward to further detail from the government as to what is going to change and by how much. We reiterate that many Australians are anxious about their future, and they want to know what's going to happen in September. Australians need to be assured that, when circumstances change for them, an adequate and inclusive social safety net will be there for them.

Media Freedom

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (12:42): Freedom of speech, academic freedom, and a free media are the most important pillars of our democracy. In the time permitted today, I would like to set out what is actually a misfeasance—and I don't use that word lightly—by the Australian Communications and Media Authority in their findings against the broadcaster Alan Jones. I'll start with their press release of 21 May. In the very first paragraph it states that the licensee of radio station 2GB was in breach of broadcasting rules due to 'inaccurate comments he made about climate change.' Let's put that first statement by ACMA to the test that they use themselves: what did the material convey to the ordinary, reasonable listener, and was the material factual in character? What does 'an inaccurate statement about climate change' mean? The definition of 'climate change' by the Australian Academy of Science is:

Climate change is a change in the pattern of weather, and related changes in oceans, land surfaces and ice sheets, occurring over time scales of decades or longer.

That's what we mean by the words 'climate change'. Let's have a look at the 'inaccurate' statements made by Mr Jones about this. When you go to ACMA's conclusion, it says he made an incorrect assertion that 'biomass is a fossil fuel'. What does the classification of biomass as a fossil fuel or not have to do with climate change? Absolutely nothing. ACMA's very first paragraph in their press release is misleading and deceptive. It breaches the very same tests that they apply themselves.
Let's go on to the finding where they found the assertion that Mr Jones said that biomass is a fossil fuel. This is nothing other than a stitch-up. This is what you would expect from a star chamber or a kangaroo court. The point Mr Jones was actually making was that biomass is incorrectly classified as a so-called renewable. Biomass is simply the burning of wood. There are many expert commentators around the world that are waking up to the fact—as we have seen in the recent movie by Michael Moore—that biomass actually releases more carbon dioxide and more particulate matter per unit of energy than coal does. Yet we have many nations peddling out their renewables qualifications by counting biomass as a renewable.

That was the entire point that Mr Jones was making. What he said was that, when it comes to fossil fuel generation, he says that's coal and oil and gas and biomass—biomass which is dirtier than Australian black coal, I might add—if you read that as it's transcribed down from someone speaking on radio, it seems as though he said that biomass is a fossil fuel. But what he actually said, because you do not put brackets in a transcript when you're speaking live to air on radio, was:

When it comes to fossil fuel generation—

Open brackets—

(that's coal and oil and gas)—

Close brackets—

and biomass—

He was talking about fossil fuel generation and biomass, and giving a definition of that fossil fuel generation. So he simply did not make the allegation or the assertions that the Australian Media and Communications Authority have made up. Yet for that they have railroaded him, made up a false accusation, nothing more than verballing him, and then taken that verbal and misrepresented what it was in their opening statement.

This is shameful. It is absolutely shameful. We have a situation in this nation where we have a government authority acting as arbiters of truth in a free media. This is absurd. We do not need government authorities to be doing this. Why should taxpayers pay to have government bureaucrats sit down and go through the entrails of a speech made in the free media and be the arbiters of truth, when they themselves cannot meet that standard? We need to make changes to this act, the broadcasting and communications act, to take away this power from ACMA, because they have shown that they are incompetent, inefficient and engaged in misfeasance in the use of this power.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 12:47